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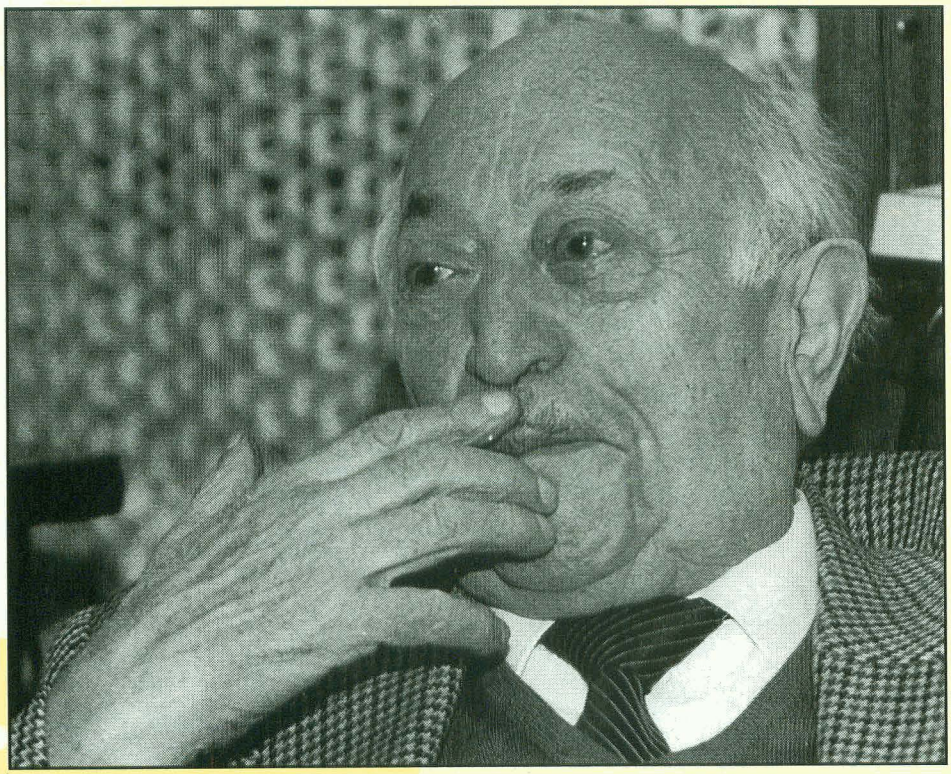

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Jan van Pelt Sees Reason
Samuel Crowell

— And More —

A Startlingly Dissident Look at World War II, From an American Journalist who Sided with Axis Germany

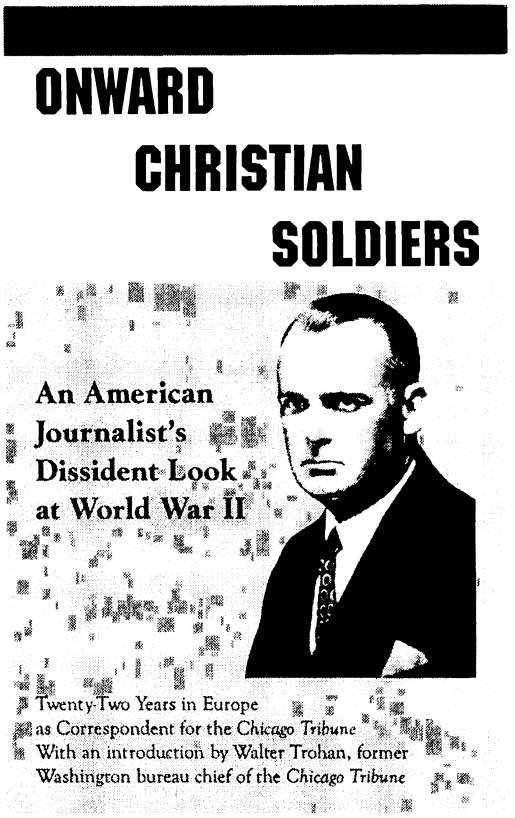
A seasoned American observer of the European scene who refused to compromise his integrity and principles provides an informed, outspoken view of World War II and its origins that contrasts sharply with the familiar, official accounts.

For 22 years Donald Day (1895-1966) was the only American journalist stationed in Europe north of Berlin. From Poland, Finland, Latvia, Sweden and elsewhere in northern and central Europe, he covered events as correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune.* His dispatches were read by millions of readers of the *New York Daily News,* the *Chicago Tribune,* and dozens of other American newspapers. He was also an authority on the Soviet Union. But unlike many of those who reported on Soviet affairs, he was undeceived about the true character of the Stalin regime.

As war approached in March-August 1939, Day lamented Britain's anti-German policies and the sharply anti-German tone of the British press, which he attributed to Jewish power and influence. In early 1939 the authorities in Warsaw barred him from verifying the rapidly accumulating reports of Polish persecution of the country's ethnic German minority, which was an important factor in the rising tension between Germany and Poland that culminated in the outbreak of war on September 1, 1939.

In 1940 Day reported from Latvia on the brutal Soviet subjugation of the Baltic lands. He was virtually the only western journalist to provide frank, first-hand coverage of this great human tragedy. Similarly, he accompanied Finnish troops as they advanced into Soviet territory in the summer and fall of 1941.

He wrote *Onward Christian Soldiers* in late 1942 and early 1943, at a time when, he believed, the future of Western civilization hung in the balance. Convinced that Third Reich Germany was Europe's only bulwark against Soviet tyranny, Day resolved actively to enlist in what he regarded as the West's crucial struggle for survival.


ONWARD
CHRISTIAN
SOLDIERS
An American Journalist's Dissident Look at World War II
Twenty-Two Years in Europe as Correspondent for the Chicago Tribune
With an introduction by Walter Trohan, former Washington bureau chief of the Chicago Tribune

In the summer of 1944, at a time when the tide of war had already shifted decisively to the Allies, he moved to Berlin to work for German radio. From September 1944 until April 1945, he broadcast from the beleaguered capital city, speaking out against President Roosevelt and America's military-political alliance with Stalinist Russia, and the ruthless Allied war against Germany and Christian Europe.

What moved this middle-aged veteran journalist to risk being branded, and punished, as a traitor? In this valuable memoir, Day reveals the character and thinking of an American who decided to enlist with Axis Europe.

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by Donald Day
With a preface by journalist Walter Trohan, and a foreword by historian Mark Weber.
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On the cover: Simon Wiesenthal, man of many secrets: Did he collaborate with both the Nazis and the Communists in World War II?

The Journal of Historical Review (ISSN: 0195-6752) began publication in 1980. It upholds and continues the revisionist tradition of scholars such as Harry Elmer Barnes, A. J. P. Taylor, William H. Chamberlin, Paul Rassinier, and Charles Tansill. *The Journal of Historical Review* is published six times yearly by the Institute for Historical Review, P.O. Box 2739, Newport Beach, CA 92659. Subscription price: $40 per year, $65 for two years, and $90 for three years. For foreign subscriptions, add $20 per year. For overseas airmail delivery, add $40 per year. Remittances for subscriptions must be payable in U.S. dollars drawable on a U.S. bank. Donations to the IHR are tax-deductible.

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This issue of the *Journal* centers on the issues of memory and truth. Orwell's memory hole, down which goes evidence of authentic events displeasing to Big Brother, has long captured the imagination of readers of his *1984*. Yet it's doubtful that many of today's readers grasp the proliferating parallels between the control of information in the novel and in contemporary Europe and North America. It isn't simply that news that threatens or embarrasses the authorities is routinely suppressed: we are taught (and conditioned) to forget what is true, and to remember what is false — sometimes under legal sanction.

None of the other taboos equals that of questioning the Holocaust and its heroes. Our latest exposé of Simon Wiesenthal builds on recently unearthed documents and previous *Journal* studies to show that this leading merchant of Holocaust "memory" has repeatedly changed his story on the most important aspects of his wartime experience. Furthermore, we demonstrate that Wiesenthal, who has often been extolled for his elephantine recall in the service of Holocaust vengeance, has chosen to forget some of his most revealing recollections of those years.

Don Heddesheimer examines the wartime journalism of Soviet reporter Boris Polevoy, known to revisionists for his early, and imaginative, reporting on Auschwitz. Heddesheimer uncovers the roots of Polevoy's writing in the Russian classics, and analyses the literary techniques which allowed the journalist to manufacture "memory" out of fantasy on the front line during the Second World War. As Heddesheimer shows, Polevoy's war reporting was highly effective in getting ordinary people in the USSR and around the world to struggle for communism for many years after it appeared. Our researcher's consideration of Polevoy's writings on Auschwitz and other camps serves also to remind of the too often neglected role of Soviet propagandists in the creation of the contemporary hoax.

Frequent contributor Dan Michaels, an expert on modern Soviet military and political history, provides a haunting overview of the vast network of penal camps that spanned the USSR for most of the twentieth century, and of recent attempts to commemorate some of their millions of victims. These camps, for all the efforts of a gallant few historians and writers, continue to exist only at the edges of Western consciousness. Nor has there been any effective effort to bring the functionaries of the Soviet terror apparatus to account for their actions. What a contrast to the vast enterprise that has hunted, caught, tried, and punished German and other Axis personnel from 1945 to the present! This valuable article establishes that neither the victims of the camps nor those that created and ran them are yet forgotten — or should they be.

Whatever its shortcomings, David Irving's stout-hearted single combat against the arrayed forces of the Holocaust industry in the Lipstadt trial two years ago continues to power revisionist advances. Brian Renk's study of the evidence for the all-important crematoria roof holes, which grew out of his research for Irving in that trial, in our last issue is followed here by Samuel Crowell's review of *The Case for Auschwitz* (!), an important new book by Lipstadt expert witness Robert Jan van Pelt. Crowell reports van Pelt's surprising readiness to consider revisionists' positions, including Crowell's, and analyzes the author's attempts to answer them. Crowell's review, likely not the last word on *The Case for Auschwitz* in these pages, masterfully examines van Pelt's concessions and arguments, in particular as they bear on his research on Irving's behalf.

That we revisionists differ among ourselves on many issues is recalled by Arthur Butz's polite challenge to David Irving's assessment of the ancestry, and motives, of financier and gold miner Henry Strakosch, who rescued Winston Churchill from bankruptcy at a key point in his career.

Robert Faurisson delineates and defies the mushrooming contempt for intellectual liberty among the leaders of his own country and its neighbors in a piercing answer to a judicial summons from Switzerland — a place to which Voltaire and other dissenters could flee their censors in more enlightened times. And John Weir, in an engaging essay on how imaginative exterminationist methods of deciphering wartime German documents stack up against medieval English savant William of Ockham's famous counsel of interpretative parsimony, well demonstrates how the revisionist approach better fits the methods of science and scholarship, as evolved over the centuries, than the logic-chopping and appeals to authority of our opponents.

In closing, we hope that you will find this issue a memorable one, but we trust you will read even these pages in a critical spirit, to hasten our progress toward "bringing history into accord with the facts," in the words of Harry Elmer Barnes.

— *Theodore J. O'Keefe*

Review and Revision

AXIS TO GRIND: As America's hollow, but cheap, victory over the Taliban continues to unravel in Afghanistan, President Bush has disheartened those of us who had hoped that what we recently called the "American wing" of his administration would prevail in the national councils. By designating Iran, Iraq, and Red herring North Korea as the "Axis of Evil" in his annual State of Union speech, the president both signaled the ascendancy of his administration's Zionist faction, and reduced the rest of the planet, including our chief allies and clients (save one), to consternation and confusion.

Thus the emotional response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, with its (understandable) aura of preliminaries to a World Wrestling Federation match, has not been supplanted by a sober strategy that sets realistic limits to U.S. intervention abroad and puts American, not foreign (or "international"), interests first. The bizarre monicker "Axis of Evil" alone gives cause for trepidation. Those (often cuttingly cruel) skits parodying George W. on Saturday Night Live begin to seem believable, and it grows more difficult to repress the fancy that the president's daily intelligence briefing comes in comic book format, with our leader confronting a Saddam Hussein who declaims: "Stand back, Pretzel Man, or, by Allah and Lex Luthor, I shall destroy the universe!"

The Bush administration has offered no credible evidence that Iran and Iraq (which have long detested one another), let alone North Korea, supported or took part in, jointly or singly, the murderous attacks on U.S. soil of September 11, 2001. Lately none of their regimes seems any more active than any of their neighbors (including Israel) in supporting attacks on innocent civilians. But both Iran and Iraq are opponents of Israel, so that President Bush has been forced, like a bumbling chef, to fold "seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction" into his anti-terrorist omlet. In his moral ardor (or, perhaps, ardor to pass for moral) the president made it seem as if seeking such weapons were worse than having them, and having them were worse than having used them (although, to be sure, Iraq used such a weapon against its own minorities and against Iran in the 1980s, when Saddam Hussein was our de facto ally against the now long forgotten Shiite menace). Of course, just as Bush decides who's a terrorist today, tomorrow he will be the judge of which nations are guilty of attempts to come by nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons (who doubts that Israel, with its large and stealthily acquired nuclear arsenal, will emerge unchastened?). And, thanks to a timorous Congress and a slumbering citizenry, in his role as commander in chief President Bush has virtually a free hand to attack any country that meets the criteria he finally settles on with the help of Paul Wolfowitz and the rest of the administration's Zionist wing.

AFGHAN UNRAVELING: We've vanquished the Taliban with minimal casualties of our own, and the truth is that U.S. bombing was not as murderous as we and other critics had feared. Indeed, it's probable that U.S. and British bombs killed more non-combatants on many a single night over Germany than in the Afghan campaign to date. Nonetheless, our forces have failed to capture putative 9/11 mastermind Osama bin Laden, or a single leader of his network. At this time that effort continues, with mounting American casualties. Simultaneously the U.S. is roiling the contentious ethnic and factional mix by yet another patronizing, and likely doomed, attempt at "nation-building" (it's difficult to recall a successful republic ever being founded by a convention largely peopled by "warlords"). The different gangs are already tweaking Uncle Sam into bombing rivals falsely tagged as Taliban, exposing deficiencies in gathering and assessing local intelligence that augur ill for U.S. military ventures already underway in the Philippines, the Caucasus, and Yemen, or being mooted for Colombia, Somalia, and elsewhere. By far the worst effect of the Afghan affair, however, has been its transformation of George Bush into a war president (without a declaration) who seemingly intends to keep American forces in constant combat around the planet — at least until his approval ratings begin to drop.

'LITTLE BROWN BROTHERS'?: The ominous news that the U.S. has dispatched hundreds of "military advisors" to the Philippines has been underplayed in the media, and thus largely overlooked by the public. The ostensible purpose of the intervention is to train the Philippine armed forces attempting to subdue "terrorists linked to Al Qaeda" in the southern part of the archipelago. Our leaders assure us that this expedition will ignore Muslim separatists in and around the island of Mindanao

who have been waging a guerrilla war unrelated to Osama bin Laden for decades now. American commanders have acknowledged that our troops will accompany Filipino regulars into battle, and take part as necessary. Clearly the nexus "Southeast Asia-jungle-guerrillas" no longer gives pause.

If Vietnam has slipped our minds (except for the occasional war movie), the first American foray into the Philippines has vanished into oblivion. Yet the Spanish-American War, as the American republic' s portal to overseas empire, is worth remembering. The climate for the war was stirred up beforehand by American newspaper reports. These consisted largely of atrocity propaganda aimed at the concentration, or "reconcentration," camps the Spaniards had instituted for interning Cuban guerrillas and their families. (In today's spin, those Cuban "freedom fighters" might qualify as "terrorists.") Despite Spain's recall of its commanding general, Valeriano Weyler, and the relaxation of his internment policy in late 1897, the propaganda continued. The explosion and sinking of the U.S.S. *Maine* in Havana's harbor in early 1898, blamed (not very convincingly) on the Spaniards, led to an American declaration of war against Spain and the invasion of Cuba. Admiral Dewey's quick victory over a Spanish fleet in Manila Bay and the rise of an armed Filipino independence movement put Spain's Philippine colony on the table, too. By the terms of the peace treaty Spain was forced to give up the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam, as well as Cuba.

Of these four former colonies, only Cuba was granted formal independence immediately. This came at the cost, however, of the inclusion in Cuba's constitution of the humiliating Platt Amendments, by which the United States was awarded the somewhat paradoxical prerogative to intervene in Cuba whenever it deemed the island's independence to be threatened. After President McKinley declared his intent "to take them all and to educate ... and civilize and Christianize" the largely Catholic Filipinos (to whom McKinley insultingly referred as Americans' "little brown brothers"), their islands were made an American colonial dependency. When the Filipino guerrillas continued their fight for independence against American rule, U.S. troops waged a grueling, merciless war against them in the jungles. The methods of our forces soon rivaled those of the Spaniards in Cuba. In the words of the American diplomatic historian Samuel Flagg Bemis: "The maddening guerrilla tactics of the natives caused the Americans to feel some measure of sympathy for 'Butcher' Weyler, and to do him the honor of adopting a form of reconcentration." While many countries have fared worse than the Philippines under half a century of American rule (and nearly as long a period of U.S. suzerainty), no one denies that the Filipinos were happy to see us go.

Thus, as in the First and Second World Wars, did a foreign policy begun in proclaimed altruism and pursued with thundering self-righteousness end not only in failure, but in a betrayal of America's professed national ideals.

As of this writing, ten of the American soldiers sent to the Philippines have perished, in a helicopter crash that may have been caused by enemy fire.

ON THE 'HOMELAND' FRONT: To date there has been no serious inquiry into why our bloated intelligence and security apparatus failed to detect the 9/11 plot and foil the attacks (the incipient Congressional investigation is not expected to be very searching). CIA chief George Tenet, who continues to deny that the disasters represent a failure of U.S. intelligence, not only remains in place (seriously inhibiting his underlings from blowing any whistles), but is a leading strategist in the continuing Afghan imbroglio. Meanwhile, the FBI continues to dawdle in apprehending a suspect in the anthrax killings, although a prominent scientist has recently revealed that the feds have known for months that the perpetrator probably worked in a laboratory for biological warfare at Ft. Detrick, Maryland, and certainly was a government insider. In January, sources in the Justice Department were still disseminating the lie that revisionists, among other "extremists," might have been behind the murderous mailings. Finally, a propaganda office hatched in the Pentagon fell victim to guileless military spokesmen who let out that the purpose of the Office of Strategic Information was to disseminate false information. Administration efforts to deny this embroiled spokesmen in difficulties that recalled those ancient paradoxes so appealing to the Sophists: "Donald, a Pentagon official, says that all Pentagon officials are liars ..."

MIDEAST MAYHEM: Israel's treatment of the Palestinians remains the number one lightning rod for Muslim discontent with the United States. Heartened by their American patron's indifference, the Israelis are plumbing new depths of cruelty and depravity in their war on

refugee camps. The hard truth is that the responsibility for what our media miscall "the cycle of violence," including the abominable attacks on civilians by Israelis and Palestinians alike, lies chiefly with the United States. Were it not for our government's insistence on financing Zionist mistreatment of the land's rightful inhabitants, and its persistence in rejecting the advice of the rest of the planet, the Israel-Palestine quandary could have long ago been resolved under international supervision.

Realm of the Senseless: France is formally a republic, but when it comes to freedom of thought and inquiry, King Holocaust rules with an iron fist. Government measures against revisionists — which over the years have included outlawing dissent on the Holocaust, fining or imprisoning heretics, dismissing them from jobs, ending their careers, revoking academic degrees, draining them by lawsuits, and allowing them to be physically attacked — have lately intensified. Now the French government has expanded its onslaught against free speech to target an entire university.

One might think that the University of Lyon III, where Jean Plantin's master thesis (on Paul Rassinier) was annulled last June, eleven years after it was duly accepted with high marks, had earned the congratulations of France's powerful Holocaust lobby. Instead, a commission formed by France's Jewish minister of education, Jack Lang, will comb through university records dating back to the 1970s in an attempt to sniff out a plot by revisionists to recruit and advance their own kind. That there have been a few Lyon III professors willing to listen to revisionists is true (two of them, Jean-Paul Allard and Pierre Zind, sat on the jury that awarded Henri Roques a doctorate, based on his study of the testimony of Kurt Gerstein, that was subsequently revoked by order of an earlier French minister of education). What would have been dubbed a witch hunt had it targeted Communists during the Cold War has been gearing up for months with scarcely an admonitory notice from the press of what used to be known as the "Free World." Education minister Lang explains that he has no desire to restrict academic freedom, but reminds that combating "xenophobia and Holocaust denial" in line with French law is the higher principle. Although the mayor of Lyon has formed a separate commission to investigate the university, banshee-like wails are already rising from various Holocaust-affirming groups affronted at the slow progress of the inquisition.

Jean Plantin, the scholarly, industrious, and courageous revisionist from Lyon, who was convicted of Holocaust denial and given a suspended sentence one year before his master's degree was effectively revoked, has continued to irk the Holocaust bullies by privately circulating his *Etudes Révisionnistes* — but not so privately that the local Holocaust enforcers didn't get wind of it and sound the alarm. While Plantin is legally within his rights, his attackers figured that the police and judges could get around such technicalities — and so they have: in the form of a long list of court-prescribed harassments by judges, probation officers, and policemen issued last November.

On December 19 of last year, Robert Faurisson prevailed against an appeal of his successful suit against the magazine *L'Histoire* for denying his legally prescribed right to respond to a personal attack. On the next day, however, *Quid*, a one-volume reference work widely consulted by French students, knuckled under to five Jewish pressure groups by agreeing to omit an estimate of deaths at Auschwitz by Dr. Faurisson, which had somehow crept into the book, from future editions. The media hullabaloo over the affair doubtless caused more than a few curious students surreptitiously to look up this latest offering to France's memory hole.

King Holocaust, despotic usurper that he is, continues to pauperize such French revisionists (and family men) as Jean Plantin, Serge Thion, and others who have paid with jobs and careers to keep the torch of Paul Rassinier, the first systematic revisionist of the Holocaust, ablaze. They need, and deserve, our support. (Contributions earmarked for Plantin, Thion, and other French revisionists may be sent to the IHR, which will see that they reach the intended recipients.)

Open Season on Revisionists

Robert Faurisson

[Dr. Faurisson wrote this article some eight months ago. While some of the legal circumstances have changed (as the preceding article makes clear), his description of the continuing persecution of revisionists in France, Switzerland, and elsewhere in Europe has lost none of its freshness, acuity, or defiance. — Editor]

This very day, Serge Thion is being tried in Paris, while Vincent Reynouard answers a summons to

appear before an examining magistrate in Limoges. I myself have been notified by Michel Favre, an examining magistrate in Fribourg (Switzerland), of his finding that I am guilty of violating Switzerland's anti-revisionist law by writing a revisionist article. He has sentenced me to one month's imprisonment without bail. My article had appeared in a booklet published in August 2000 by the society Vérité et Justice (CP 355, CH 1618 Châtel Saint Denis, Switzerland). The society's three leaders currently face legal proceedings which will allow them to be heard in court.

As for me, I received no word whatsoever that I was being prosecuted. The examining magistrate neither warned me nor informed me. He didn't send me a summons; he didn't question me. What he did do, if I may say so, was to convict me by mail. Some will be astounded by this. They don't know that when it comes to suppressing those who anger Jewish or Zionist organizations, trust, and law, and justice no longer matter. Those who have been designated "Holocaust deniers," "war criminals," "criminals against humanity," or even "Palestinian terrorists" by these organizations have learned this to their cost.

Our Fribourg judge strikes me as less deceitful than such French justices as Simone Rozès, Pierre Drai, or Françoise Simon, who notify me, summon me to appear, pretend to listen to me, and convict me, no matter what arguments I make in my defense. *Tomorrow, I shall inform Michel Favre by registered letter that I shall not appeal his ruling; I am ready to surrender to the Canton of Fribourg to serve my sentence.* Were I naive enough to challenge his decision before a Swiss court, I would receive the same treatment as Swiss revisionists in the past: first, I would be told that mounting a revisionist defense would violate the law anew; thus my counsel could only raise legalistic quibbles, and plead mitigating circumstances; finally, any witness who testified on the heart of the case, historical accuracy, would, at the urging of the prosecution, be charged immediately. I would then be sentenced to twelve or fifteen months in prison, and my fines and costs would be considerable. To avail myself of the protection of my French nationality doesn't even bear considering: French authorities, in their attempts to please the Grand Sanhedrin, would cooperate with Switzerland against me, as they did with a Dutch court in my Anne Frank case. Besides, I no longer have the time, the money, or the strength to compete in these unwinnable judicial marathons.

In Switzerland as in France, and a good number of other countries in the world, Jewish organizations have, through constant pressure, obtained the passage of special laws providing for the prosecution of those who don't believe in the kosher version of the history of the Second World War, with its genocide of the Jews and its Nazi gas chambers (not to be confused with the crematory ovens, the existence and usefulness of which, in camps ravaged by epidemics, are contested by no one). The Fabius-Gayssot Act of July 13, 1990, provides for a prison term of from one month to a year, a fine of from two to three hundred thousand francs, and still other penalties against skeptics in France (it is a violation of this law merely to express doubt). An identical law has oppressed Switzerland since 1995. Needless to say, these laws are insolently labeled "anti-racist" by their authors and enforcers.

For the reader's information, I should note here that, like my other revisionist articles, the piece that earned me today's conviction was inspired by the sixty-word sentence that I uttered during an interview with Ivan Levaï on the Europe 1 radio network in December 1980:

> The alleged Hitlerite gas chambers and the alleged genocide of the Jews form one and the same historical lie, which has permitted a gigantic political and financial swindle the main beneficiaries of which are the state of Israel and international Zionism and whose main victims are the German people — BUT NOT THEIR LEADERS — and the Palestinian people in their entirety.

In the jargon of our so-called examining judge in the land of the "glacious Swiss" (Céline: *Suisses glacieux*), "a favorable prognosis cannot be posited." He

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Robert Faurisson is Europe's foremost Holocaust revisionist scholar. Born in 1929, educated at the Sorbonne, Professor Faurisson taught at the University of Lyon from 1974 until 1990. Specializing in close textual analysis, Faurisson won widespread acclaim for his studies of poems by Rimbaud and Lautréamont. After years of private research and study, Faurisson revealed his skepticism of the "Holocaust" gas chambers in articles published in 1978 and 1979 in the French daily *Le Monde*. He has written numerous articles on all aspects of the "Holocaust," many of which have appeared in this journal. A four-volume collection of many of his revisionist writings, *Écrits Révisionnistes* (1974-1998), was published in 1999.

means that no penance or repentance can be expected from me. Here for once is a clear-sighted judge! He must know that ten physical assaults and a stream of court convictions, writs of seizure, a recent police search of my house, banning from my profession, torrents of slander in the national and foreign press (particularly *Le Monde*, the oblique daily) have only strengthened me in my determination, especially because, in terms of scientific argumentation, we are still right where we were on February 21,1979, when a "historians' declaration" published in the self-same newspaper amounted to a declaration that there was no one who could answer me on the subject of the Nazi gas chambers.

I shall continue my revisionist intifada all the way to prison.

19 June 2001

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NB: In Lyon, so virulent has been the campaign that Jewish organizations are waging against the Universities of Lyon II and III that the officials of those institutions, one after another, have groveled before them, in a display of the most shameful servility. Thus revisionist scholar Jean Plantin has been summoned by the president of the University of Lyon III to reappear before the jury which, eleven years ago, awarded him the mention "très bien" for his master's thesis on Paul Rassinier. The Jewish groups, and those who follow their lead, are demanding that the thesis be invalidated — and thus the degree. In so doing, the president has cited no law, rule, or administrative regulation. Nothing finer was ever devised in the Kingdom of the Absurd.

Recently, Jean-Louis Berger lost his right to teach high school, and Serge Thion was expelled from the CNRS (Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique).

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Registered letter addressed to Michel Favre

I was never notified, either by you or any other Swiss authority of your country, of the initiation of the proceedings against me. I see that, in the secrecy of your chambers, without having heard me, you have just sentenced me to a month in prison without bail and ordered me to pay 230 Swiss francs in "court costs."

Your penal order of June 15, 2001, was delivered to me yesterday, June 19. I am ready to surrender to the Canton of Fribourg to serve my sentence. You must inform me as quickly as possible of the place and date of my incarceration.

I would like, if possible, to see your face.

Robert Faurisson
Vichy, Wednesday, June 20, 2001

The Razor and the Ring

JOHN WEIR

"Plurality is not to be assumed without necessity."
William of Ockham

The fourteenth century Franciscan theologian, William of Ockham, is credited with using a method to trim logical absurdities out of arguments that came to be named for him. This method, today known as Occam's Razor, or "Entities are not to be multiplied without necessity," was developed to show that the realm of theology was separate from that of science; scientific proof for the existence of God, he concluded, was not possible. Therefore science and theology, being different, required different methods for their advancement.

This division of science from theology allowed modernism to take hold in the West. Scientific investigation could now go forward unfettered by religious dogma, which men relegated to the world of metaphysics. Scientific knowledge thereby became restricted to that which could be observed and tested. Theology, on the other hand, advanced through thoughtful speculation and faith.

The basis of the razor is simplicity. A model based on the simplest explanation of the data available is usually the best. Scientists and mathematicians, therefore, strive for simplicity and elegance in their theories describing the physical reality that surrounds them.

Consequently, a basic question that needs answering is whether history is to be described using scientific principles, since the events of history occur in the physical world, or whether it is part of theology, since histor-

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ical events are used in the making of myths that support a particular world view and popular basic philosophical truths.

Recently, several documents have been "discovered" in archives. A few of them have only recently been declassified, and they purportedly shed light on certain details of the Jewish Holocaust that were not known before. These recent revelations are an illustration of the taffy pull of history that is going on now between the scientific Occam's Razor and Holocaust theology's magic decoder ring.

For Zionists, the Holocaust is more than an historical event. It is the embodiment of their view of the world. The Shoah verifies that Jews can never trust Gentiles, but must control their own destiny. Otherwise, only death — at the hand of the Gentiles — awaits them. The Holocaust is proof of that and reinforces the need for a Jewish state to safeguard their survival. The theological dogma to this must only be supported — not undercut — by historical events. Therefore, events and documents dealing with the fate of the Jews at the hands of the Nazis must be interpreted only in a way that supports this Holocaust theology and Zionist view of reality.

The first of the documents is a Chilean diplomatic report dated November 24, 1941, and was in the hands of the American Office of Strategic Services [the chief U.S. intelligence agency during the war — ed.] by March 1942. This report has been quoted in the press to read in part "The Jewish problem is being partially solved in the Protectorate [Reich Protectorate of Bohemia], as it has been decided to eradicate all the Jews and send some to Poland and others to the town of Terezin, whilst looking for a more remote place." The press articles somehow concluded from this that the OSS, and therefore the American government, knew the Germans planned to kill all of the Jews of Europe by March of 1942 and that the Germans had planned this by the previous November. Yet that is clearly not what the Chilean diplomat's report says, or means.

Next, in January of 1942, the famous Wannsee Conference was held to finalize the details of the extermination of the Jews, or so it has been said. Yet this is not what the minutes of the meeting actually say. They read, in part, in translation to English as follows: "Under proper direction the Jews should now in the course of the Final Solution be brought to the East in a suitable way for the use as labor.... The evacuated Jews are to be bought first group by group into the so-called transit ghettos, in order to be transported from there farther to the East." This is consistent with the Chilean document: Jews were to be deported to the East.

The third document was very recently discovered and published. Its publication was treated by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) in an article posted on their Web site on Wednesday, January 16, 2002. (See: http://www.fpp.co.uk/History/General/Korherr/JTA150102.html)

This document is a translation of an intercepted German encoded message, dated January 11, 1943, that summarized the activity at the so-called transit ghettoes, described in the Wannsee Protocol, for the year 1942.

The JTA's correspondent, Toby Axelrod, states that this intercept "indicates" the number of Jews killed at these "extermination camps" during 1942. Enter the decoder ring, here not the cereal box premium once prized by aspiring boy "G-men," but rather a mighty decipherer of hidden meanings in Holocaust texts. The document doesn't say the Jews were killed, it only indicates the number for each camp: 434,508 at Belzec, 101,370 at Sobibor, and 713,555 at Treblinka. The document also provides a total of 24,733 for Lublin (Majdanek), but since Lublin is not considered by the keepers of the Holocaust to be an extermination camp, that is omitted from the article.

If this document doesn't in fact describe mass exterminations, what does it reveal about the fate of the Jews at these camps? The encoded wireless telegraph message marked "State secret!" describes these numbers as "recorded arrivals." In the document the same terminology is used for Lublin as is used for the imagined "extermination camps," but the wielders of the decoder ring can tell the difference: When the Nazis used the term "arrival" for three of the four camps, that "indicated" the Jews were killed on arrival, but — for one out of the four — it did not.

The total recorded arrivals for the four camps for the year 1942 was 1,274,166. It was this number that stimulated the interest of researchers Stephan Tyas and Peter Witte, the discoverers of the intercept, because it matches a number which appears in an April 1943 secret statistical report by a Nazi statistician, Richard Korherr, on "The Final Solution of the European Jewish Problem." (See David Irving's website, at http://www.fpp.co.uk/History/General/Korherr/index.html)

This report was assembled by Korherr on the order of Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler. The purpose of

the report was to estimate the change in the number of Jews in Nazi-controlled territory from 1933 to the end of 1942. Korherr subdivided his statistics into several categories: Deaths over Births, Emigration, Evacuation, and Other. There was no listing for "Killed in Death Camps" or anything like it. The number that appeared in the intercept and also in Korherr's report is listed under the heading "Transport of Jews from the Eastern Provinces to the Russian East: Processed through the Camps in the Government-General," which falls under the "evacuation" category.

Because the number of deaths for Jews at Lublin, as of the end of 1942, is recorded separately in Korherr's report as 14,348, it is obvious that "arrivals" means something other than "murdered" in the context of the January, 1943 intercept, because the figure in it is over ten thousand higher than the number listed as dead for Lublin (Majdanek) by Korherr in his report. In light of the Korherr report, therefore, the decoder ring "solution" of the January 11, 1943, is an arrant fraud.

Though it is clear from the context of his report that Korherr didn't consider "evacuated" to mean "killed," today's guardians of "Truth and Memory" reject the obvious. Korherr's report was a secret document created for Himmler, who certainly would have known what the report was about, because he had commissioned it. Yet we are told that it contains code words to hide the fact the Jews were being murdered en masse — despite the report's explicit statement that the evacuated Jews were to be considered a reduction in the population of Europe's Jews for purposes of the report only.

Like the word "arrival," the terms "transported east," "evacuated," "resettled," and "sent to Poland" are all phrases which mean "killed," according to the Holocaust cryptographers. This principle, applied to Nazi documents dealing with the Jews, can make just about any word mean "murdered." All you need is the Holocaust document decoder ring. Those who wield this wondrous ring can discover new meaning even in documents that have already been decrypted and translated. Even better, with this magical device one can find any meaning desired.

The decoder ring is the theological opposite of the scientific razor. It allows one to add a layer of complexity so that evidence can be manipulated to fit the theory. No longer does a document have to mean what it says. For dogmatists, this makes the decoder ring much more useful than the razor, for Occam's Razor enjoins inflexible simplicity, while the ring promises infinite possibilities and complexity.

The conclusion to this conundrum is rather simple: since there are two choices of how to interpret Holocaust documents, which to select depends on one's philosophical outlook.

If the answer has already decided upon, apply the ring: then "arrival" means murdered; and "evacuated" means murdered; "resettled" means murdered as well, as does "transported." This is convenient when restating dogmas known a priori.

Conversely, if the answer has yet to be determined, apply the razor. The documents mean what they say: The Jews were assembled and transported east by the Nazis where the Jews were put into ghettoes deep inside occupied Soviet territory.

Which to use is a matter of taste. Revisionist historians employ Occam's razor; the defenders of "Truth and Memory" use their Holocaust decoder rings, which allow the evidence to "converge" wherever, and however, their dogmas desire.

Was Churchill's Gold Bug Jewish?

ARTHUR R. BUTZ

In volume 5 of his biography Winston S. Churchill, published in 1976, historian Martin Gilbert relates the working relationship that existed during the 1930s between Churchill and the South African economist and gold mining executive Sir Henry Strakosch. Most of the figures on German armaments that Churchill brought to the House of Commons and publicized elsewhere were supplied by Strakosch, who wished anonymity in the affair.

Strakosch eventually had to pay heavily for such services. Gilbert relates that Strakosch saved Churchill from financial ruin in 1938 when, due to declines in the New York markets, Churchill's brokerage account went into debt in the amount of £18,000 ($90,000), which

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Churchill could only begin to cover by selling his house Chartwell. Strakosch picked up the tab for this fancy sum, at a time when a decent American salary was perhaps $2,000 per year. In addition, Strakosch bequeathed Churchill £20,000 when he died five years later.[1]

In the first volume of his *Churchill's War* (1987), David Irving repeats this story but adds that "Strakosch was a Jew born in Moravia, Czechoslovakia." The purpose of this note is to express my skepticism that Strakosch was a Jew, and to expose the specific political cause that his involvement served.

Evidence Strakosch Wasn't Jewish

Strakosch died near London on Saturday, October 30, 1943, and *The Times* (London) published a long obituary on November 1, eulogies on the second, and on the fourth a report of a memorial service for Strakosch. It was clearly a Christian service, held at St. Michael's, Chester Square.

Thus Strakosch died a nominal Christian. That does not exclude the possibility that he was partially of Jewish descent or converted from Judaism, but neither David Irving nor anybody else has been able to provide hard evidence in that respect.

From several sources we learn the following about Strakosch.[2] He was born May 9, 1871, in Hohenau, Austria, son of Edward Strakosch and Mathilde Winterburg. Hohenau is on the Austria-Moravia border, and Edward Strakosch was a pioneer in the Austrian beet sugar industry. Henry was educated at the Wasa Gymnasium in Vienna and then privately in England. He joined the Anglo-Austrian bank in London in 1891, rising quickly to become foreign exchange manager. He then became interested in gold mining and finance and emigrated to South Africa in 1895. He joined the gold mining enterprise Goerz and Co. in 1896 as assistant managing director, rising to chairman in 1924, a position he held until his death (the company had become Union Corp. in 1918). He was known as "keen on polo, an inveterate motorist, and a bachelor."

Strakosch was adviser to the government in the drafting of the South African Currency and Banking Act of 1920, which led to the establishment of the South African Reserve Bank. From 1925 on, India retained him for similar purposes. He was knighted in 1921, and became a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1924, and Knight Grand Cross of the British Empire in 1927.

He got married late in life, in 1941, to the widow Mrs. Mabel Elizabeth Vincent Temperley, in a Christian ceremony at St. Andrew's in Kingswood, Gloucester.

None of the sources on which the above summary is based gives any indication of a Jewish connection for Strakosch.

Two books that ought to have had much about a man of Strakosch's importance, if he had been Jewish, do not list him in their indexes. They are *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy,* by Mendel Kaplan (Cape Town: C. Struik, 1986), and *The Jews in South Africa: A History,* editors Gustav Saron and Louis Hotz (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1955).

The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1971) mentions two Jewish Strakosches, but not Sir Henry (it also mentions one Jewish Irving, but not David). If a Jew, or someone of partial Jewish descent, or a Jewish convert to Christianity had played such an important part in the background to the Second World War then it would seem that the *Encyclopaedia* would have at least mentioned it.

The death and obituary notices in the four issues of the London weekly (Fridays) *Jewish Chronicle* for November 1943 contain no mention of Strakosch.

The simple explanation for all of this is that Strakosch was not a Jew.

Who Says That He Was?

The Jüdisches Biographisches Archiv (1994), a massive database available on microfiche, cites two sources that indicate he was a Jew. The first is a book or pamphlet entitled *The Jews' Who's Who: Israelite Finance: Its Sinister Influence* (London: Judaic Publishing Co., 1920). A copy of this publication could not be consulted but the Jüdisches Biographisches Archiv quotes from it as follows:

> Strakosch, Henry. Director of A. Goerz & Co. £1,500,000. This company which is a South African "control" house, has now extended its tentacles to West Africa, Nigeria, and Mexico. In addition to its very considerable direct mineral holdings, this House has interests in a huge number of companies, mostly mining, with property all over the world. It is in consequence a close Jewish preserve, and not a single Anglo-Saxon was on its Board in 1914. It is technically a purely British Co., but it has been suggested that its cosmopolitan and Asiatic flavour entitles it to be called "Britisch."

The text goes on to list other directors of the com-

pany. The names given are not obviously Jewish names but one gets the impression that the reader is supposed to consider any non-British, especially German, name a Jewish name.[3] It lists some other companies that Strakosch was allegedly a director of, and there are indeed Jewish connections there, but that was unavoidable. The most important example is the Geduld company, controlled by Samuel Marks and Isaac Lewis, both Jews from Lithuania.[4]

In defense of the author of the pamphlet it should be noted that the leading German-speaking entrepreneurs who migrated to South Africa in the nineteenth century were predominantly Jewish. The assumption German-Jew was an understandable fallacy, but a fallacy nevertheless.

The main defect of the pamphlet is that it seems ignorant of the history of Goerz and Co. at the time of publication (1920). In fact there was no company of that name in 1920; it became the Union Corporation in 1918. Its founder, Adolf Goerz (1857-1900), was an immigrant from Germany and not a Jew.[5] Although the company had maintained close relations with Germany and in particular the Deutsche Bank in Berlin, Goerz had incorporated it in England. On the outbreak of war in 1914 five of the eight directors were German subjects. The British forced them off the board and by 1918 both the name of the company and the character of the board had changed.[6] The British would not have distinguished in this purge between Germans and German Jews, and Austrians would have been considered Germans. Strakosch survived, no doubt on account of his strong British connections. The basic objection to this pamphlet, therefore, is its apparent ignorance of the status of the matter treated at the time of its publication. The Goerz board of 1914 was irrelevant in 1920. It also sounds like the sort of publication that is recklessly eager to seize any stick to beat a Jew, of which we have seen many.

The second source mentioned by the Jüdisches Biographisches Archiv is more credible. In a 1949 article Albert M. Hyamson listed about 2500 prominent "Anglo-Jewish" people, each getting one or two lines in his sixty-nine pages. One of them was:

> Strakosch, Sir Henry (1871-1943). Economist & banker; The Times, 1.11.43; Ann. Reg.; "Randlords."[7]

The first two references are to Strakosch's obituaries, already cited here, which do not say he was a Jew. The third is to the book *Randlords,* by Paul H. Emden. Emden merely gives some biographical information about Strakosch and mentions his relation to Adolf Goerz thus:

> One of the earliest collaborators of Adolf Goerz (from 1896 on) was the present Sir Henry Strakosch, whose influence and importance extend far beyond the limits of gold production. He is recognized the world over as an authority on monetary matters and exchanges; his influence on the development of currency and the organization of Banking in South Africa was so great that the objection was expressed that "the Commission seems to have been clay in the hands of Sir Henry Strakosch."[8]

Emden does not say that Strakosch was a Jew, and there appears to be no basis for Hyamson classifying him as such. One notes that Emden was listed in Hyamson's acknowledgements as having made "valuable criticisms and suggestions." Perhaps Emden told him privately that Strakosch was a Jew.

According to the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* Hyamson was a Zionist Jew who became anti-Zionist after serving as Britain's Chief Immigration Officer in Palestine, 1921-1934. He published several books about Jews and also a general (not specifically about Jews) reference work, *Dictionary of Universal Biography,* issued in 1915, 1950 and (in the U.S.A.) 1951. His entry for Strakosch in the last is:

> Strakosch, Sir Hy.; Hung.-Eng. econ. and financ., 1871-1943. S

The "S" signifies that his obituary is to be found in the *Annual Register.* In accord with his general objectives in this work, Hyamson does not declare Strakosch to be Jewish, but he does declare him to be Hungarian-English. None of the other sources indicates he was Hungarian. Strakosch came from a town in Austria distant from Hungary, but as an Austrian he no doubt had some dealings with Hungarians. His father's beet sugar business probably reached into Hungary. Another connection to Hungary is via Adolf Goerz, who managed gold mines and other interests in Hungary before emigrating to Africa around 1890.[9] None of that makes Strakosch Hungarian.

Another basis for dissatisfaction with Hyamson's classification is that I can't trust any source which, after his death, classifies Strakosch as a Jew without at least mentioning that he died a nominal Christian. I consider Hyamson to be not well informed about Strakosch, whose name was just one of thousands he listed in

his various works. I think the weight of the biographical information is against Hyamson's classification of Strakosch as a Jew.

The idea that Strakosch was a Jew has become part of folklore; just search the Internet for "Strakosch"! In his 1994 biography *Churchill*, Clive Ponting also says that Strakosch was a Jew, in a phrase that smells very much as though carried over from Irving. I suspect that the spread of the belief is largely due to Irving's remark.

Then What Was He Up To, and Why?

The question of Strakosch's ethnicity is only important in relation to the question of what political forces were acting, during the thirties, to destroy Hitler. If Strakosch was a Jew, then political motivations that would explain his conduct would be obvious. If he was not a Jew, then the question of motivation arises. Why was he out to get Hitler? An answer is given in a booklet he published in 1935, in which the gold miner argued for the restoration of an international gold standard for currency.[10] Strakosch considered that the cooperation of Britain and other "Sterling countries" was attainable, but it was not possible to

> attain a full measure of recovery unless America and Germany are also brought into the fold ... Substantial progress in this direction has already been achieved in America ... The German situation, on the other hand, remains hopelessly confused, not so much because her problems are fundamentally so very different and so much more difficult, but because of the manner in which they are being faced. There is hardly a single one of the many and varied measures she has taken which can be said to be of real value for her restoration — indeed, most of them tend to impede it ...[11]

It is well known that this judgment of the efficacy of Hitler's economic policies was wrong. The Nazi economic policies were notoriously successful, and have been called "The Nazi Miracle," which Hitler performed knowing at the outset that "The international financial world would stand on its head and attack our currency with all the means at its command."[12]

The important point is that we see the motivations that Strakosch brought to the campaign against Germany. Hitler was on the way to proving him wrong. Thus to describe Strakosch as a "Jew" in this context is to do more than make a mistake about ethnicity. Strakosch should, rather, have been described as "a South African gold miner campaigning for restoration of the international gold standard." If he had been a Jew, I still would not have described him as Irving did. I would have written "a Jewish South African gold miner campaigning for restoration of the international gold standard."

Ironically, one conclusion to draw is that it doesn't really matter much whether or not Strakosch was Jewish, as long as it is understood what interests he represented. Irving's treatment of Strakosch, however, has the unintended effect of camouflaging a very important dimension of the background to the Second World War.

This investigation resulted from a discussion Dr. Butz had with Mr. Safet Sarich of Chicago, who passed away as this issue was going to press. Only he and his wife Ingeborg knew that his days were numbered, as he maintained his keen interest in the future of his family, nation, and civilization to the end. We mourn the loss of this good friend and supporter of IHR.

Notes

1. *The Times*, Feb. 7, 1944.
2. *Annual Register* (London, 1943); *The Times*, August 15, 1941; John F. Riddick, *Who Was Who in British India* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1998); Eric Rosenthal, *Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa*, 6th edition (London and New York: Frederick Warne,1973); C.J. Beyers, *Dictionary of South African Biography* (Cape Town: Tafelberg-Uitgewers, 1977); Walter H. Wills and R.J. Barrett, *The Anglo-African Who's Who and Biographical Sketch-Book* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1905).
3. It should be noted that at the time many Britons associated Jewish intrigues with Germany. See Nesta H. Webster, *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*, 1924, especially pp. 365ff.
4. Robin McGregor, *McGregor's Who Made South Africa*, vol. 1 (Saxonwold, S.A.: Purdey, 2000), pp. 26-30. McGregor presents a chart indicating who was and was not Jewish.
5. Ibid, pp. 138-141. As the preface explains this is vol. 1 of a projected series on "the positive contributions made by each of South Africa's twenty-five-odd cultural groups to its development ... the Jewish contribution ... comprises the first part of this volume. As a significant number of Jews are of German origin, it seemed appropriate to relate the contribution made by the Germans as the second part."

6. Geoffrey Wheatcroft, *The Randlords* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1985), pp. 118, 244.
7. Albert M. Hyamson, "Plan of a dictionary of Anglo-Jewish biography," in *Anglo-Jewish Notabilities: Their Arms and Testamentary Dispositions* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England, 1949). Hyamson was president of this society.
8. Paul H. Emden, *Randlords* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935), pp. 217, 342. Remarks in this article on what books say about Strakosch are based on the pages indicated in the indexes to those books. In the writer's opinion, the burden of more exhaustive research in search of credible evidence that Strakosch was a Jew is that of those who make the claim.
9. *McGregor's Who's Who*, p. 140.
10. Sir Henry Strakosch, *The Road to Recovery: With Special Reference to the Problem of Exchange Stability and the Restoration of the International Gold Standard* (New York: Economic Forum, and London: *The Economist*, 1935). Seventy pages, of which 27-36 were missing from the copy consulted.
11. Ibid, p. 51.
12. Alan Milard, in the *London Review of Books*, January 23, 1986, p. 21. Milard reviews several books on the subject.

RIP

Glayde Whitney, 1940-2002

The Institute lost a friend in January, when Glayde Whitney passed away in Tallahassee at the age of sixty-two. Professor Whitney, a member of the faculty of Florida State University, had achieved eminence for his research in the field of behavioral genetics. A few years ago he made waves at his university and among his colleagues by writing an introduction to David Duke's *My Awakening* (available from the Noontide Press), which contains a popular treatment of the case for Holocaust revisionism. Professor Whitney was a speaker at the Institute's thirteenth conference two years ago, and proved to be as personally engaging as he was dedicated to researching and standing up for free inquiry in pursuit of knowledge. His presence is missed.

IHR

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SET FOR JUNE

Leading Revisionist Historians and Activists to Meet in Southern California

Scholars, activists and friends of the Institute for Historical Review will meet in Orange County, California, from Friday afternoon, June 21, through Sunday afternoon, June 23, 2002 – for the 14th IHR Conference.

Leading revisionists will report on the latest breakthroughs in the international fight for historical truth, from headline-making developments in the Middle East, to the growing support for Holocaust revisionism around the world, as well as on the formidable efforts of our enemies to silence debate and to outlaw dissent. As at every IHR Conference, vanguard researchers will present new findings, based on archival research, that replace "official" lies with historical fact.

The full Conference program is still being set, and updated information will be announced on the "Conferences" section of the IHR web site. But already the line-up of scheduled speakers includes: Joe Sobran, columnist and author; Tom Sunic, scholar and diplomat; Prof. Tony Martin, author and scholar; Prof. Robert Faurisson, scholar and activist; Arab "mystery speaker"; Mark Weber, IHR director; Greg Raven, MC for the event; Ted O'Keefe, IHR Journal editor, and Robert Countess, author and IHR editorial advisor.

For further information, including a registration form, call or write, or check the "Conferences" section of the IHR web site: www.ihr.org

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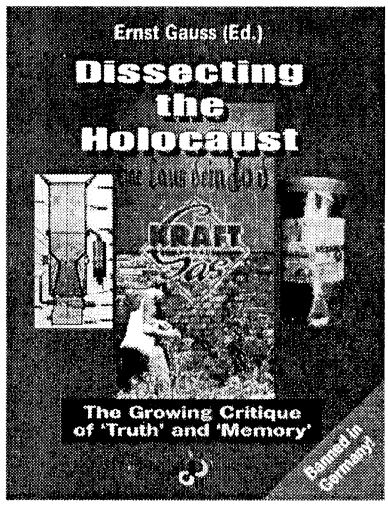
The Most Important Dissection of the Holocaust Story in Years!

Packed with stunning revelations, this scholarly, attractive and well-referenced work is the best revisionist critique of the Holocaust story to appear in years.



In this big (8 1/2 x 11 inches), illustrated, 600-page collection, 17 specialists — chemists, engineers, geologists, historians and jurists — subject Holocaust claims to withering scrutiny. They expose bogus testimonies, falsified statistics, doctored photos, distorted documents, farcical trials, and technological absurdities. They provide expert examinations of the alleged Holocaust murder weapons: gas vans and gas chambers.

Among the 22 essays in this anthology are:

- Germar Rudolf (E. Gauss), "The Controversy about the Extermination of the Jews.
- Robert Faurisson, Preface and "Witnesses to the Gas Chambers of Auschwitz"
- John C. Ball, "Air Photo Evidence"
- Mark Weber, "'Extermination' Camp Propaganda Myths"
- Friedrich P. Berg, "Diesel Gas Chambers: Ideal for Torture, Absurd for Murder"
- Carlo Mattogno, "The Gas Chambers of Majdanek"
- H. Tiedemann, "Babi Yar: Critical Questions and Comments"
- Udo Walendy, "Do Photographs Prove the NS Extermination of the Jews?"

Writes Dr. Arthur R. Butz: "There is at present no other single volume that so provides a serious reader with a broad understanding of the contemporary state of historical issues that influential people would rather not have examined."

It's no wonder that alarmed authorities banned the original German edition, ordering all remaining copies confiscated and burned.

Dissecting the Holocaust is edited by Germar Rudolf ("Ernst Gauss"), a certified chemist, born in 1964, who wrote "The "Rudolf Report," a detailed on-site forensic examination of the "gas chamber" claims of Auschwitz and Birkenau. After a German court sentenced him to 14 months imprisonment, he fled his homeland and has been living ever since in exile as a political refugee. Since 1997, he has been editor of the German-language historical journal *Vierteljahreshefte für freie Geschichtsforschung*.

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The War Years of Simon Wiesenthal: New Light on a Dark Past

THEODORE J. O'KEEFE

The Institute for Historical Review has recently obtained from the U.S. National Archives a copy of a document dating from 1945 that provides new evidence that famed "Nazi hunter" Simon Wiesenthal collaborated with the Soviet Union during the Second World War.[1] The author of the document, a "curriculum vitae" submitted to American military authorities at the former concentration camp at Mauthausen, in Upper Austria, is Wiesenthal himself. He claims in this autobiographical statement that he served the Soviet occupation regime in the east Galician city of Lwów (today Lviv) as an engineer and was well rewarded for his services to the Communist government. Wiesenthal's 1945 account offers strong corroboration of a sworn statement he made to U.S. authorities in 1948, first published in the *Journal of Historical Review*, that he had functioned as a "Soviet chief engineer" in Lwów during the 1939-41 Soviet occupation.[2]

Thus, in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, Wiesenthal twice contradicted what would later become his standard story of his time in Soviet-ruled Lwów: that he was forced to work as a poorly paid factory mechanic and narrowly escaped deportation to the interior of the USSR. The "curriculum vitae" and accompanying documents provided by Wiesenthal in 1945 contain additional statements that contradict important aspects of Wiesenthal's standard account of his war years. These records are of further interest in that they provide the first documentary evidence of Wiesenthal's career as a denouncer and tracker of alleged German war criminals.

Lwów: The Missing Years

On May 25, 1945, some three weeks after American forces had captured the camp, the recently liberated inmate Simon Wiesenthal submitted his "curriculum vitae" and a list of ninety-one men and women he alleged were guilty of war crimes to the "U.S. Camp Commander, Camp Mauthausen." In an accompanying cover letter, Wiesenthal, writing with the restraint that was to become his trademark, claimed: "Many of these have caused incalculable sufferings to myself as well as to my fellow inmates," and went on to state: "Many of these I have personally seen commit murder phantastic in number and method." The list of "war criminals" itself, and Wiesenthal's efforts to identify, characterize, and accuse them, will be considered briefly below. Because it is "Ing. Szymon Wiesenthal," as he signed these documents nearly fifty-seven years ago, who is under investigation here, his statements about himself rather than about his quarry are of chief interest.

Wiesenthal opens the "curriculum vitae" (actually closer in form to a short autobiography than a standard c.v.) that accompanied his other submissions with a brief and seemingly unremarkable paragraph about his origins and education. The next paragraph reads:

> After the outbreak of the war I stayed in Lemberg and after the entry of the Red Army continued my work as a construction engineer and a designer of refrigerating plants and other various constructions as well as private dwellings.

Curriculum Vitae
of
Ing. WIESENTHAL, Szymon

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
by authority of Lt. Col. U.S. F.E.T.
file AG 000.5 (Gen) [illegible] 7 June 1946
[illegible]
AG 000.5 (Gen) [illegible]
7708 War Crimes Group, 1 March 1946

Born on December 31, 1908, in Buczacz, Poland. My education comprises public and high schools in that city, Institute of Technology in Prague where I received the degree of Engineer in Architecture (1932), State diploma in Architectural Engineering in Poland (1939) with simultaneous degree of Free Artist from the Polish Academy of Art in Lemberg (1937).

After the outbreak of the war I stayed in Lemberg and after the entry of the Red Army continued my work as a construction engineer and a designer of refrigerating plants and other various constructions as well as private dwellings. During this period I invented an artificial insulation material for which the Soviet Government awarded me a premium of 25,000 rubles.

When after the outbreak of the German-Soviet war that city was taken by the German troops, I was immediately arrested on July 13, 1941, as one of the Jewish intelligentia. Of independent means, through a bribery I succeeded in getting out of the prison. Because of the anti-Jewish restrictions I could not continue my profession of an architect, and worked for a while as a painter in the railroad shops in Lemberg. On October 20, 1941 I was again arrested for the reason of not having declared my engineering degree which I in fact did not wish to disclose, not willing to work for the Germans. After four weeks I was sent back to work at the same railroad shop as a draftaman where I was kept for almost two years among other 1500 Jews compelled to labor like myself. It was during this time that my life was several times placed in extreme danger, and that I lost both of my parents who were killed by the Nazis. It was also during this time that I saw mass destruction of Jews in that city, although my own wife managed to escape to Warzsaw. Of her I have not heard since and may only assume that she perished in that city during the uprising in August, 1944, when 200,000 Jews lost their lives there. It was only through working in the railroad shop that I managed to survive in the end.

When it became clear to me that Nazis have launched their policy of the wholesale anihilation of Jews, I escaped on October 18, 1943, from the Lemberg hard labor camp where I was kept as a prisoner during my two years of labor at the railroad works (as a prisoner I was sent to the shop daily under guard with the others) and went into hiding until joining Jewish partisans on November 21, 1943, who operated there. It was while fighting in the partisan ranks against the Nazis that we managed to collect and bury for safekeeping considerable amount of evidence and other materials proving the crimes committed by Nazis. When the partisans were dispersed by the Germans I fled to Lemberg on February 10, 1944, and again wnet into hiding. On June 13, 1944, I was found during a house to house search and was immediately sent to the famous Lacki camp, near that city. Since there was no escape for the partisans who were caught, I attempted suicide by cutting the vbins on my arms but was saved.

With the beginning of the Russian offensive, I was sent from one concentration camp to another as the result of constant German retreat. These camps include Przemysl, Dobromil, Chyrow, Sanok, Dukla, Grybow, Neu-Sandez, Krakow-Plashow, Grossrosen, and Buchenwald. To Mauthausen I came on February 15, 1945.

/s/ Ing. Wiesenthal Szymon
Ing. Szymon WIESENTHAL

Simon Wiesenthal submitted this brief account of his life, centering on his experiences during the war years, to U.S. Army authorities at Mauthausen on May 25, 1945, three weeks after American forces captured the concentration camp.

> During this period I invented an artificial insulation material for which the Soviet Government awarded me a premium of 25,000 rubles.

These two sentences supply more concrete detail regarding Simon Wiesenthal's work, status, and relationship to the Soviet authorities during the twenty-one months the USSR occupied Lemberg (as Lviv is known in German) than any other statement or account by Wiesenthal that has appeared to date. As noted above, Wiesenthal's 1948 testimony to a U.S. Army interrogator lends corroboration to his 1945 statement and provides further details about his activities from September 1939 to mid-1941: "Active until 1939 in Poland as a professional engineer architect [*sic*], between 1939-1941 Soviet chief engineer employed in Lemberg and Odessa. 10 days prior to the outbreak of war between Germany and Russia I returned to Lemberg, where I experienced the German entry." Wiesenthal's express claim to have been a "*Soviet* [emphasis added] chief engineer" is telling in itself. If, as he states, he worked in Odessa, some three hundred miles away in Soviet Ukraine, then he enjoyed travel privileges afforded only a few inhabitants of the occupied lands of prewar eastern Poland. The only USSR destination for most citizens of Poland during the first Soviet occupation was the Gulag.

Simon Wiesenthal's 1967 "memoirs," *The Murderers among Us*, strongly contradict his claims of 1945 and 1948.[3] *Murderers* has the following to say about his employment in Communist-ruled Lwów: "By the middle of September, the Red Army was in Lwow, and again Wiesenthal found himself 'liberated[.]'... The Wiesenthals managed to stay in Lwow, but Wiesenthal's days as an independent architect were over. He was glad to find a badly paid job as a mechanic in a factory that produced bedsprings."[4]

If what Wiesenthal said in his statements from 1945 and 1948 about his employment, status, and means under the Soviets is correct,[5] then there are other questions to be answered on the full extent of his activities and affinities in Lwów from 1939 to 1941. Was he a member of the Communist party? Did he acquire Soviet citizenship? Did he take part in the persecution of the city's Polish and Ukrainian Christian majority? And why was Wiesenthal — apparently trusted by the Soviets, capable, and with vital skills — not evacuated with the Red Army, as were so many others, when it abandoned Lwów in mid-1941?

Saved by the Bells?

One of the most famous tales from the Wiesenthal canon describes his arrest and hair's breadth escape from execution at the hands of Ukrainian auxiliary police a few days after the arrival of the Wehrmacht. As recounted in *The Murderers among Us*,[6] on the afternoon of July 6, 1941, a Sunday, Wiesenthal was arrested by a Ukrainian policeman and brought to Lwów's Brigidki prison. In Wiesenthal's telling, after about forty Jews had been collected in the prison courtyard, the Ukrainians lined them up and began shooting them, one by one. Wiesenthal relates that the killers feasted on sausages and swilled down vodka between murders. The memoirs relate: "The shots and the shouts of the dying men were getting closer to Wiesenthal. He remembers that he stood looking at the gray wall without really seeing it. Suddenly he heard the sounds of church bells, and a Ukrainian voice shouted 'Enough! Evening mass!'" That night, his account continues, Wiesenthal was rescued thanks to a chance encounter in his cell with a Polish acquaintance serving in the Ukrainian auxiliary police. The policeman devised an audacious plan: he would tell the other police that Wiesenthal was a Soviet spy, and that he had to bring him before a Ukrainian commissioner elsewhere in the city. Although Wiesenthal claims to have been badly beaten, the friendly policeman was able to lead him and another "spy" (a friend of Wiesenthal's) out of the prison, and — "after a series of narrow escapes" — both men were back home the next morning.

Wiesenthal's concededly laconic account in the 1945 curriculum vitae clearly contradicts the story told in his memoirs. He writes:

> When after the outbreak of the German-Soviet war that city was taken by the German troops, I was immediately arrested on July 13, 1941, as one of the Jewish intelligentsia. Of independent means, through a bribery I succeeded in getting out of prison.

In this 1945 version, less than four years after the purported event, Wiesenthal's arrest comes a week later than in his memoirs. Here he attributes his release from prison to a bribe, rather than to a chance encounter and the implied altruism and sang-froid of a Polish friend. Although in this document and the 1948 interrogation Wiesenthal describes countless atrocities he claims to have suffered or witnessed, they mention no festive shootings by Ukrainian auxiliary police.

Wiesenthal's 1948 testimony strengthens the presumption against his miraculous escape from a Ukrainian massacre by omitting any mention of an incarceration in July 1941. Instead, he tells this story: "On 8 July I was forcibly removed from my residence by two soldiers and a Ukrainian auxiliary policeman — a group of about sixty Jews, who had been similarly dragged from their homes, was waiting on the street; we moved slowly down the street, because new Jews were continually brought from their homes. When there were around 100 or 120 of us, we were brought to the German army railroad yards, where the army engineers awaited us. We were forced to run the gauntlet and nearly every one of us received a kick or the lash of a whip." Wiesenthal goes on to state that he continued to work as a forced laborer at the railroad yards, returning home nights, for at least the following two weeks.

Jewish apologists understandably make much of various scurrilous stories, oftentimes quite untrue, that have been directed at the Jews over the centuries. In the light of Wiesenthal's testimony from 1945 and 1948, which contradicts as well as omits the dramatic account of his escape from the Ukrainian bloodbath, might the story in his memoirs be a carefully crafted "blood libel" against Ukrainians — and their church?

A Charmed Life?

While the evidence of Wiesenthal's 1945 and 1948 statements points toward his having collaborated with the Communists during the war, Wiesenthal has more frequently been accused of collaborating with the Germans than with the Soviets.[7] While published evidence of such collaboration remains scarce, interesting questions arise from his different accounts of certain wartime experiences — such as his strange and conflicting stories about his recapture and subsequent treatment by the Germans in 1944.

Wiesenthal is consistent in his claims to have escaped from German custody in Lwów in 1943.[8]

His accounts of how he spent his several months of freedom differ, however. While in his memoirs he claims merely to have hidden from the Germans, in his 1945 curriculum vitae Wiesenthal wrote that he had joined and fought in the ranks of "Jewish partisans." In the 1948 interrogation he testified that he had been a major with the partisans, specializing in designing bunkers and fortifications, and strongly implied that his group had Soviet backing.

He claims to have been recaptured in June 1944. In the 1945 curriculum vitae, he provides this version of what happened:

> It was while I was fighting in the partisan ranks against the Nazis that we managed to collect and bury for safekeeping considerable amount [*sic*] of evidence and other materials proving the crimes committed by Nazis. When the partisans were dispersed by the Germans I fled to Lemberg on February 10, 1944, and again wnet [*sic*] into hiding. On June 13, 1944, I was found during a house to house search and was immediately sent to the famous Lacki camp, near that city. Since there was no escape for the partisans who were caught, I attempted suicide by cutting the veins on my arms but was saved.

The 1945 statement does not explain how, as a Jew and a partisan, he was "saved" while in the custody of the German security forces. Wiesenthal had an answer for that question in his 1948 interrogation, however. He testified: "On 13 June 1944 we were in this bunker [in Lwów — Ed.].... A search for arms was carried out and we were discovered. We were in a position where we could not even make use of our own arms...." After being arrested, Wiesenthal states: "I immediately cut open my artery. We were taken to the Lonsky prison and they found some of my records. We had been waiting every day for a Soviet offensive, so we made certain records at this time concerning the whole partisan area where we were. These notes were in our possession, and I owe it specially to this circumstance that I was not killed right away as so many other Jews, for these records seemed to be very valuable and therefore [*sic*] I was taken into a prison hospital after my attempted suicide." Thus, according to Wiesenthal's 1948 account, he was not merely a Jew and a partisan, but an armed Jewish partisan. Inasmuch as the Red Army was driving toward the city at that time (the Germans abandoned Lwów a month later), it is difficult to understand how a partisan officer and specialist caught with partisan documents was, at the least, not speedily interrogated — rather than being allowed to recuperate in a hospital for over a month, as Wiesenthal states elsewhere in the 1948 interrogation.

As noted above, there is nothing about Wiesenthal's having been a partisan in his memoirs. Nonetheless, *Murderers among Us* states that he was captured with a pistol (for which surely he would have been dealt with as a partisan), and "a diary [he] had kept and a list of SS guards and their crimes that he'd compiled, believing that one day it might be useful."[9] Although the memoirs report that the pistol was immediately stolen by one of

the arresting officers for sale on the black market (if Wiesenthal correctly divined his purpose), in this account Wiesenthal is nonetheless caught with a sheaf of juicy allegations against individual German officers for eventual presentation to the Allies at some later day.

Once again, Wiesenthal is not only spared, but by his account never interrogated. He claims to have evaded torture by twice attempting suicide — first by cutting his wrists, then by attempting to hang himself. After he has been hospitalized and fattened up on a fortifying diet, however, on July 15, 1944, the day appointed for his interrogation, the Germans seem to forget Wiesenthal's diary and list: the Red Army is drawing near, and Wiesenthal is sent westward with a contingent of Jewish prisoners.[10]

Whatever is to be made of the discrepancies and improbabilities touched on above, it is worth noting that in each of the above tellings one of the most prominent "survivors" of Hitler's alleged attempt to exterminate the Jews has acknowledged that he survived circumstances which, given an extermination policy, *should* have guaranteed his speedy death.[11] And, given the various implausibilities in his several accounts, the suspicion arises that Wiesenthal *was* in fact interrogated, raising the question: if so, why has he chosen to deny it?

Falsus in Uno...?

A venerable legal saw has it, "Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus," meaning, more or less, "Once a liar, always a liar." The objection to that is that many people sometimes tell lies, yet that doesn't mean that they always lie, let alone that their speaking a truth makes it untrue. Clearly, the less stringent interpretation must govern the evaluation of personal testimony, including that of Simon Wiesenthal. Nonetheless, often enough Wiesenthal gives us pause.

In his 1945 c.v. Wiesenthal declares: "It was during this time that my life was several times placed in extreme danger, and that I lost both of my parents who were killed by the Nazis." In the accompanying cover letter, he writes: "With all of the members of my family and of my nearest relatives killed by the Nazis, I am asking of your kindness to place me at the disposal of the U.S. authorities investigating the war crimes."

Wiesenthal's memoirs, however, after noting that his father served in the Austrian army during the First World War, state unambiguously: "He was killed in action in 1915."[12] Might Wiesenthal have been referring in his 1945 statement to his step-father, then? Not according to his memoirs: "Wiesenthal's stepfather was taken to a Soviet prison, where he soon died."[13] Wiesenthal is silent on the fate of his parents in his sworn statement of 1948.

Studying Wiesenthal's false attribution of his father's death to the Germans in 1945 (doubtless to gain sympathy from the Americans) and the many other contradictions in his testimony tempts one to augment the categories of the legists with a new one: "falsus in pluribus."

Wiesenthal's List

The list of alleged war criminals Wiesenthal offered the American forces fills four pages, and is the first hard evidence of his Nazi-hunting activities. Deprived of the list he claims that he buried in the forest (or that perhaps the Gestapo had confiscated from him), Wiesenthal was forced to rely on his own prodigious memory, with consequences that will be noted below. There is no evidence that Wiesenthal testified in the trial of anyone designated on the roster, which as will be seen gives little hard data as to specific misdeeds of those listed, and few clues as to their whereabouts. Nonetheless, Wiesenthal's list serves to anticipate his career as a gifted publicist of atrocity allegations — and may provide hints about certain of his wartime doings.

In the brief heading that introduces the list of ninety-one names, Wiesenthal writes: "The following is a brief list of SS men and Gestapo agents as well as Nazi party members whom I had the opportunity of seeing to partake in murder and other crimes against human life." The list is divided into two groups, those whom Wiesenthal had encountered (or perhaps heard of) in "District Galicia (Lemberg)" and those in "Camp Cracow-Plashow" [*sic*].

Wiesenthal makes many accusations of mass murder (added up, the death toll he ascribes to his ninety-one Nazis comes to about 1,150,000), but gives details on very few of the crimes he alleges: in fact he names the date and place of a specific crime in only three instances. Thus, while Wiesenthal claims that someone he calls simply "Krieger, Maj. Gen. SS" (probably Obergruppenführer Friedrich-Wilhelm Krüger) "On Aug. 18, 1941 finished personally 13,000 people by shooting," and that four officers "Killed 7,000 on Nov. 18, 1943 in Lwów," usually he favors the diachronic perspective: "Killed 1,200 Jews in his shop, Lemberg" (of Georg Gross, "chief of the Lemberg railway shops"); "Killed 8,000 Jews in Tarnopol alone" (of "Rokita," said to be an Untersturmführer); "Greatest killer of all. His

Simon Wiesenthal is all smiles as he poses with a poster for the television miniseries that starred Ben Kingsley (who later portrayed Oskar Schindler's wartime accountant in *Schindler's List*) as the intrepid "Nazi hunter." Although scriptwriter Abby Mann had consulted Wiesenthal's 1945 submissions to the U.S. Army, he chose to portray Wiesenthal in accord with the later legend.

victims run into thousands" (of "Amond [sic] Goeth," commander of the Plaszow camp near Cracow); "Responsible for several thousands of deaths" (of someone designated simply as "Hasse"); or "Ditto" (of "Kipko, Untersturmführer" who follows "Hasse" on the list).

Despite its lack of precise information on specific misdeeds, Wiesenthal's list abounds in concrete characterizations of those he accuses. His only accusation against one "Scherner" (perhaps Julian Scherner, who served as SS- und Polizeiführer of the Cracow district) is "Killed sick in the hospital," while "Hujar Untersturmführer" is described as "Winner of numerous wagers by *sending* one bullet through two heads at a time" and "Lied," said to be an Unterscharführer, is called a "Degenrat [*sic*] collector of his victims' skulls." In some cases Wiesenthal takes care to specify exact methods, a few of which sound like categories in a hellish Holocaust Oscar night: "Worst sadist and killer using ax only," others of which sound simply foolish: "The last two specialized in hanging and chopping men alive." There are many lesser or vaguer accusations ("Camp's recorder. Many cruelties"; "Introduced keenest sadism"; "'Worked' in Bohemia"), while about twenty persons on the list are not accused of committing *any* crime. The list shows glimmerings of its author's knack for devising colorful nicknames for the headlines, but Wiesenthal was as yet short of mastery, e.g. of one "Engels, Gestapokommissar": "Timekeeper and schedule maker for mass killing throughout Galicia."

Although the implication of the heading is that Wiesenthal witnessed many of the misdeeds of those he lists ("whom I had the opportunity of seeing to partake in murder and other crimes against human life"), he is explicit about witnessing only one crime, the alleged shooting of thirteen men with American passports "on [*sic*] August, 1944."

Seemingly deficient as hard evidence of criminal acts, the Wiesenthal list would also seem not to have been very helpful in locating the 91 persons it enumerates. Although Wiesenthal provides rank or (sometimes general) office for some 70 of those listed, he is able to supply the first names (and in one instance simply an initial) of a mere 18 of them. Forty-two of the alleged war criminals are identified by their hometowns or places of origin, but nearly all these refer simply to cities (while 2 are said to be from "Holland," and 3 from the Batschka region, at that time occupied by Hungary). Only 5 listings mention streets, and of those just 2 give specific addresses. And Wiesenthal is able to identify the civilian occupations of only 12 of the 91 listed, and those of an additional 3 of their relatives.

It is beyond the scope of this article to attempt properly to identify the 91 persons on Wiesenthal's list, let alone whether they committed the crimes alleged by Wiesenthal, or what became of those of them who actually existed. An analysis of Wiesenthal's list yields data of possible significance in reconstructing certain of its author's wartime associations, however. Wiesenthal identifies 13 of those listed as "Gestapo agent[s]," 8 of whom he places in Lemberg/Galicia, the other 5 in Cracow/Plaszow. For the remaining 78 persons listed he is able to provide 10 first names and 1 first initial (14.1 percent); 34 places of origin (43.6 percent); and 10 civilian occupations, including two of family members (12.8 percent). For his 13 alleged Gestapo agents, however, Wiesenthal gives 7 first names (53.8 percent); 9 places of origin (69.2 percent); and 5 civilian occupa-

tions, including that of one in-law (38.5 percent). Wiesenthal's assignment of a military or police rank to only one of the 13 designated as Gestapo agents (in contrast to the other 78, for 54 of whom, among them Gestapo officers, he lists military or police ranks) strengthens the implication of the term "agent" that these were undercover operatives, whether military or civilian. That Wiesenthal is able to provide so many more particulars for such shadowy figures than he can for the more readily recognizable officers and NCOs he names would seem to add weight to the suspicion that Wiesenthal was himself an agent of the Gestapo.

Wiesenthal beneath the Whitewash

As is well known, Simon Wiesenthal has been the object of something approaching a cult since the 1960s. His skillful packaging of vengeance disguised as justice and his (often invented) adventures on the trail of euphoniously nicknamed Nazi supercriminals have made him a hero throughout the Western world. While he has had his detractors, including Israeli diplomats and intelligence operatives, Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky, and the Institute for Historical Review, their voices have been all but drowned out by a tidal wave of media acclaim.[14] Within the Holocaust industry, a sizable Wiesenthal industry has long flourished: there are dozens of books by and about Wiesenthal, he has been depicted in numerous films, both documentary and fictional; and the Los Angeles foundation that pays for the use of his name has raked in tens of millions of dollars in contributions and government grants.

Nonetheless, there is compelling evidence that at least one of Wiesenthal's recent biographers had access to the documents that Wiesenthal composed in 1945. In *Simon Wiesenthal: A Life in Search of Justice*, Hella Pick discloses that Wiesenthal submitted a list of ninety-one names, dated May 25, 1945, to U.S. Army authorities at Mauthausen. Pick quotes virtually the entire text of Wiesenthal's covering letter — with the notable exception of its last sentence: "To furnish you with the personal data regarding my person, a brief curriculum vitae is attached." In fact, while the author cites most of the heading, or introduction, to Wiesenthal's list, and quotes freely and accurately from various of its accusations, she makes no mention whatsoever of the curriculum vitae, which follows the cover letter and precedes the list of war criminals in the Cracow war crimes case file in which the 1945 documents are contained.[15] Nor does the author refer to this document in any of the corresponding passages of her account of Wiesenthal's life under the Soviets, or during the rest of the war.[16]

While Hella Pick and other biographers may have suppressed the evidence of Wiesenthal's wartime collaboration and general duplicity revealed in the 1945 letter, list, and c.v., that is surely less important than the massive gullibility exhibited by Wiesenthal's vast audience of admirers throughout his long career. If Pick is audacious enough to quote, approvingly, Wiesenthal's claim that "My memory in those days was excellent" immediately after her account of his 1945 statements,[17] doesn't such calculation accurately mirror the credulity, apathy, and sloth of the wider public? For nearly forty years now his unending "hunt" for one category of alleged criminal and his defiance of due process and historical accuracy have brought Wiesenthal the highest national honors that governments can bestow as well as the uncritical adulation of multitudes.

Wiesenthal's long life is reportedly nearing its end, leaving little hope for a thorough investigation and exposure of his actual past before his death. That should by no means preclude such an inquiry by a competent group of researchers in the years to come. Punching through the lacquered facade of the Wiesenthal myth to reveal the rot behind it would uncover at least some of the decay at work throughout Western society, past and present. And, even after Wiesenthal is gone, establishing his actual behavior during the war would likely bring the Nazi hunter's reputation down a rung or two, for facts are the nemesis of "memory."

Notes

1. Memorandum from Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces. Subject: war crimes, 6 July 1945. Folder 000-50-59, Records of Headquarters U.S. Army Europe (USAEUR), War Crimes Branch, Record Group 338, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. A recent biography quotes Wiesenthal to the effect that he wrote the original documents in Polish the English versions held by the National Archives bear his name, and he has made no attempt to disavow authorship. See Hella Pick, *Simon Wiesenthal: A Life in Search of Justice* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996), pp. 84-5.
2. Interrogation no. 2820. Records of the Interrogation Division of the Evidence Branch of the Office of the Chief of Counsel for War Crimes, Record Group 238, National Archives Microfilm Publication M1019, roll 79, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. Wiesenthal's 1948 interrogation took place on May 27 and 28, ostensibly in investigation of alleged crimes

by the Wehrmacht. The interrogation was conducted in German; the extracts in this article were translated by the editor, and occasionally differ from translations in the article "New Documents Raise Doubts As to Simon Wiesenthal's War Years," in the *Journal of Historical Review* 8, no. 4 (Winter 1988-89), pp. 489-503.

3. Simon Wiesenthal, *The Murderers among Us: The Simon Wiesenthal Memoirs*, ed. Joseph Wechsberg (New York: Bantam, 1968). (The original edition was published in New York by McGraw-Hill in 1967.) While this book somewhat peculiarly combines first-person accounts of Wiesenthal's Nazi-hunting derring-do with four chapters that relate Wiesenthal's life story "as told to [editor Joseph] Wechsberg" (p. vi), it may be presumed that the biographical section has met with Wiesenthal's approval.
4. Ibid., p. 25.
5. It is worthy of note that each of two recent admiring biographies of Wiesenthal, while attempting to sustain Wiesenthal's later claim to have been a bedsprings mechanic victimized by the Communists, states that he worked for a time as an architectural engineer in Odessa during the Soviet occupation. See Pick, *Simon Wiesenthal*, pp. 48-9, and Alan Levy, *The Wiesenthal File* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Co., 1994), pp. 33-4. Both books are said to be based on extensive interviews of Wiesenthal; neither account of his activities in Soviet-ruled Lwów provides any reference to documents or transcripts of the interviews.
6. *Murderers*, pp. 26-27.
7. For example, Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky, a Jew and an inmate of Nazi concentration camps, claimed that Wiesenthal collaborated with the Gestapo during the war. See his statement in Mark Weber, "Simon Wiesenthal: Fraudulent Nazi Hunter," JHR 15, no. 4 (July-August 1995), pp. 9-10.
8. See *Murderers*, pp. 33-34; 1948 interrogation; 1945 c.v.
9. *Murderers*, p. 34.
10. Ibid., 35-7.
11. In another sworn statement, this one an application for reparations to a state pension board in Düsseldorf dating from 1954 ("Eidesstattliches Erklärung über die Zeit meiner Verfolgung," in Robert Drechsler, *Simon Wiesenthal: Dokumentation* [Vienna: n.p., 1982], Dokumente zur Zeitgeschichte 1/1982), Wiesenthal claims that he was tortured (presumably to gain information) just after his capture, but escaped by cutting his wrists and being taken to the hospital. Wiesenthal's willingness to contradict his other accounts on this detail might be explained by his desire to obtain reparation monies. This statement contains no information about his time under Soviet occupation.
12. *Murderers*, p. 23.
13. *Murderers*, p. 25.
14. Mark Weber, "Simon Wiesenthal: Fraudulent Nazi Hunter," JHR 15, no. 4 (July-August 1995), passim.
15. Pick, *Simon Wiesenthal*, pp. 85/6.
16. Pick, *Simon Wiesenthal*, pp. 48-73, passim. According to Pick (p. 85) the well-known screenwriter Abby Mann (*Judgement at Nuremberg*) consulted the Wiesenthal documents from 1945 at the National Archives while researching his Emmy Award-winning script for the1989 television miniseries *Murderers among Us: The Simon Wiesenthal Story.* Although we have not seen the miniseries, reports make clear that Mann, who befriended Wiesenthal while a U.S. Army lieutenant at Mauthausen in 1945, omitted anything seriously jarring to the legend in his script.
17. Pick, *Simon Wiesenthal*, pp. 85.

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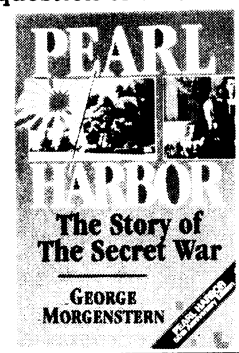

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Correction

In "Revising the Twentieth Century's 'Perfect Storm," in JHR 20, 5/6 (September-December 2001), there was a mistake in the table at the top of page 63. The number of aircraft for the USSR should read 11,167.

'Nothing Has Been Invented': The War Journalism of Boris Polevoy

DON HEDDESHEIMER

> Krushinsky and I had been the first correspondents to visit Oswiecim, then still called by its German name, Auschwitz. We had flown in after our troops and seen this vast death camp virtually still in running order ... By the time Sergei Krushinsky and I reached Birkenau, all the buildings of this fake junction and the gas chambers had been blown up and only a maze of railway tracks remained. An ordinary railway time-table was jutting out of the heaps of smashed concrete: "Train departures to Vienna ... Belgrade ... Paris ... Milan ..." We met a Polish partisan in a railwayman's uniform and square cap who knew Russian. He told us about everything that had been going on here. He showed us the so-called bath house lying in ruins and gray mounds of something resembling charcoal mingled with white stony fragments. This was ash, human ash from the ovens, 'fireplaces," as they were called here. It crackled rather strangely as though it were moaning in pain and begging for retribution."[1]

These emotive words, written over twenty years after the war, are those of Soviet journalist Boris Polevoy.[2] Once a celebrated literary figure in the USSR, today Polevoy is known to revisionists as the author of one of the first news reports on Auschwitz after its capture on January 27, 1945. Thanks to the work of Faurisson, Walendy, and others, that story, which appeared in *Pravda,* the leading newspaper of the Soviet Communist party, on February 2, 1945, is now widely known to differ drastically from the later orthodox account of the camp. Polevoy described how Auschwitz inmates were exterminated, not in gas chambers, but on an electric conveyor belt that electrocuted hundreds of them simultaneously, then dropped their bodies into a flaming blast furnace. He reported enormous mass graves, filled with at least four layers of bodies. Polevoy also described zinc-covered benches fitted with straps for restraining inmates, on which inmates were beaten to death with truncheons manufactured by the Krupp factory in Dresden.[3]

Revisionist researchers have concentrated chiefly on the factual discrepancies of Polevoy's report, consistent with their general approach to the extermination literature. Such work is of course vital, but Polevoy's activity as a journalist was not limited to writing on Auschwitz or the Holocaust. As a propagandist Polevoy had few equals in depicting German savagery or in glorifying Soviet heroism. His numerous writings on the war, published in the most influential newspaper of the USSR, not only epitomized Soviet propaganda but also

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Don Heddesheimer's study of American Jewish reactions to the Bolshevik revolution and the Communist *consolidation* of power in Russia, "Der erste Holocaust anno 1914-1927," appeared in the *Vierteljahreshefte für freie Geschichtsforschung* (3, no. 2 [June 1999]) and may be read at the VffG page of the website: www.vho.org

Pravda correspondent Boris Polevoy listens intently to testimony at Nuremberg in this drawing by Soviet artist Nikolai Zhukov, dated February 8, 1946, from Polevoy's book *The Final Reckoning*. On that day Soviet Chief Prosecutor R.A. Rudenko made his opening statement, which was largely a catalogue of imaginative atrocity accusations, including the charge that the Germans had killed "over 5,500,000 completely innocent people" in just the two "camps of Maidanek and Auschwitz with their gas-chambers" (*Trial of the Major War Criminals*, vol. 7, p. 173).

influenced Soviet behavior. The purpose of this article is to acquaint readers with Boris Polevoy, his writings, and certain literary techniques which rendered them effective.

A Life for the Soviet

Few reporters of the Second World War were as accomplished, or as influential, as the Soviet writer Boris Nikolaevich Kampov (1908-1981), who wrote under the pseudonym Boris Polevoy. Polevoy, the son of a physician, although of Jewish heritage, was born "beyond the pale" in Moscow in 1908. As a young writer he showed enough promise to join a select group of Soviet writers under the patronage of Maxim Gorky.[4]

It was not until the Second World War that Polevoy became famous throughout the Soviet Union. From the 1939-40 "winter war" with Finland to the fall of Berlin, Polevoy covered the front as a reporter for *Pravda*, while holding the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Red Army. He served six months on assignment to Stalingrad, and was present when General von Paulus emerged to surrender from his headquarters in a department store basement. Polevoy reported on the Red Army's advance from Kharkov through Bessarabia, across Poland, and into the heart of Germany. When American and Soviet forces met on the Elbe, Polevoy was there, and he visited Hitler's underground bunker in Berlin while fighting still raged in the German capital.[5] Following the Allied victory Polevoy, heading a team of Soviet journalists, reported on the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg as special correspondent for *Pravda*.

Polevoy's books, articles, and political commentaries gained him an international readership well before the end of the war. He remained influential until his death in 1981, at which time he was secretary of the all-powerful Union of Soviet Writers. During his lifetime, Polevoy was named a Hero of Socialist Labor and awarded the Stalin Prize for literature, three Orders of Lenin, two Red Banners, the Red Star, and the Gold Medal of the World Peace Council. To this day a commercial cargo ship bears his name;[6] an opera has been written about him;[7] and at least one of his admirers still leads a nation: Fidel Castro praised one of Polevoy's books in a meeting with Leonard Brezhnev.[8]

Gorky's Influence

Polevoy's mentor Maxim Gorky (Alexei Maximovich Peshkov, 1868-1936), whose pseudonymous *last* name means bitter, had been a close friend of Lenin. While his attitude toward the Soviet Union was sometimes ambivalent, in his last years he became a committed Communist. Gorky was the USSR's leading authority on the complex relationship between political and literary issues, so important in the history of Russian letters, and was the most important link between prerevolutionary and Soviet literature.[9]

Gorky set out to create a literature that would express the ideals and further the goals of the Bolshevik revolution. He saw "the people," rather than religion, as the only inexhaustible spring of spiritual values. Indeed, Gorky's school of Soviet writers strove to pro-

duce a literature that would instill in the masses the kind of loyalty and dedication to the Soviet regime that they had once felt toward religion. "This concept of the people, and the new Communist Russia they belonged to, gave rise to a feeling for the mother country which could lead people to dedicate their lives to it."[10] Gorky elaborated these goals in the 1920s and 1930s, and, put into practice by his many disciples, they exercised a profound influence on Soviet literature in the following decades.

Gorky urged his apprentices to study and learn from the great Russian writers of the past. In one recorded counsel to Polevoy, Gorky, commenting in 1928 on one of the younger writer's manuscripts (probably "The Forge Shop"), wrote that "just as a lathe worker shapes wood or metal, the literary man must know his material: language and words."[11]

Reportage in Red

During the war Polevoy wrote diary-like accounts of his activities as *Pravda* correspondent with the Red Army. His reports on his own experiences and on his interviews with soldiers and civilians reliably followed the Soviet line. Polevoy portrayed the German invaders as technologically advanced barbarians who had assaulted the peaceful USSR treacherously and without provocation, unleashing a struggle between good, personified by the Soviet peoples, and the evil of Nazi "fascism." What made Polevoy's writing stand out, however, was not rote propaganda abstractions, but the impact of particular, tangible, and often ordinary details that lent both credibility and emotion to his words.

Typical of this genre of Polevoy's reportage was "Regimental Colors,"[12] which was published in England in 1945, but had certainly appeared in the Soviet Union before that. It describes how eight survivors of a Red Army tank regiment that had been decimated in battle saved their unit's standard, then fought on behind the lines as partisans. Nazis from the Gestapo captured three of the Soviet tankers turned guerrillas, and interrogated them to no avail. After stripping the Soviet heroes to expose them to the full fury of the frigid Russian winter, the fiendish Nazis poured cold water over the Soviets until they were frozen into statues. The secret they went to their terrible deaths to conceal? Where they had hidden their regimental colors. The Nazis then went to work on the peasants. Polevoy assures his readers that the Germans "burned their bodies with soldering irons, drove nails into their arms and legs and lopped off their ears, sliced their noses and gouged out their eyes," but the peasants too went to their deaths rather than reveal the banner's whereabouts. And the regimental flag was never captured: a lovely young collective farm girl had wrapped it in clean linen and wound it around her body. She wore it day and night until the arrival of its rightful bearers, the Red Army.

"A Copy of *Pravda*"[13] recapitulates that simple story of Red loyalty and heroism in defense of Soviet ideals, as objectified in the regimental banner, against Nazi savagery. But Polevoy tells his *Pravda* tale with a twist that reminds of his aim, as Gorky's disciple, to transform the religious fervor of the people into a burning dedication to the Communist regime. Writing of how fervently the leading party newspaper was esteemed by Soviet readers under German occupation, Polevoy writes, quoting one of them:

> There are all kinds of legends current in our village about this paper. It is said that the Germans threw it in the fire but it didn't burn; then they tried to drown it in the river but it wouldn't drown. So they became furious, crumpled it, pushed it into a shell and fired the shell, but the paper wasn't lost and now there are thousands of them.

Thus, in Polevoy's telling, a solitary copy of *Pravda* proves indestructible, and even (metaphorically) capable of multiplying independently and indefinitely. The irony of the single most influential newspaper of the world's leading force for dialectical materialism behaving like a prop in a fairy tale was probably lost on a good many of Polevoy's readers.

Polevoy could conjure up the mawkish as well as supernatural in the service of Soviet propaganda.One of his dispatches from the battle of Berlin was entitled "Front Line at the Eisenstrasse" (which he described as an avenue lined with old beech trees that ran through no man's land). He reported that a curly haired German girl, no more than two or three years old, wandered out between the two front lines, lost and crying. She was rescued by a Soviet soldier — but no sooner than he had performed that heroic act, he was cut down by an SS man's bullet (a statue commemorating this alleged incident still stands in eastern Berlin). The absence of an Eisenstrasse in Berlin was remedied some thirty years later when the Communist East German authorities decided that Polevoy meant "Elsenstrasse," and that the "l" on the street sign must have been hit by a bullet so that it looked like an "i."[14] Whatever the truth of this

suspicious story, it stands the actual conduct of Soviet troops toward German civilians on its head.

Polevoy's most successful and widely sold book was *A Story about a Real Man.*[15] It became the basis of an opera by Prokofiev, was made into a popular Soviet motion picture, and gained Polevoy the Stalin Prize in 1951. Written shortly after the war, this semi-documentary "non-fiction" novel's protagonist was Alexei, a Soviet pilot who had been shot down in combat behind enemy lines and lost both his feet to gangrene before being rescued by partisans. While being treated in a Moscow hospital, he was inspired by a comrade who had also been wounded, Commissar Vorobyov. The commissar told Alexei of socialist heroes who had overcome similar difficulties and gone on to hold important positions in the party. Vorobyov used his influence to enable Alexei's rehabilitation and return to the front. Fitted with artificial feet, Alexei learned to walk, and just as important, to fly again. Reassigned to his old unit, he returned to combat. In the book's climactic episode, Alexei wins a dogfight with a pilot from the Richthofen squadron: it is the German flier who flinches, not the Soviet man of steel.

A Story about a Real Man has been translated into many different languages, and inspired Communists around the world. A Soviet literary magazine reported handwritten copies of it made by North Vietnamese soldiers, and there exists a copy said to have been pierced by a bullet and stained with the blood of a Greek partisan.[16] Unfortunately for Polevoy's bona fides, the great popularity and resultant scrutiny of *A Story about a Real Man* aroused a burning desire among its readers to find out more about Alexei and Commissar Vorobyov. While Polevoy was able to produce a pilot who had lost his feet, he eventually had to admit that Commissar Vorobyov existed only in the author's imagination.[17]

Verisimilitude and Chicken Soup

Many of Polevoy's accounts begin with such words as, "Nothing has been invented," or "All of the people in this book really lived," or "There is nothing imaginary in this book." In straightforward works of fiction, such statements would be seen as literary devices. In Polevoy's reportage and non-fiction books, his assurances that he is telling the unembroidered truth set the tone for his development, in concrete and realistic terms, of his accounts of persons met and things witnessed or heard. Polevoy tells readers how, where, and when he met his narratives' heroes, whether real or invented. He sets his scenes with prosaic exactitude. What comes next, whether an over-the-top atrocity story, a miraculous tale of Red courage, or an invented commissar, becomes believable because it seems to have evolved naturally from the ordinary and specific details that led up to it. In these writings of Polevoy, Commissar Vorobyov, a copy of *Pravda*, the regimental flag for which Germans torture and Soviets die, the nonexistent Berlin street where a Red Army man gave his life to save a small German girl, and the human ash that crackles as though moaning in pain and pleading for revenge at Auschwitz all function as markers of verisimilitude even as they convey a highly emotional message.

Polevoy carefully shapes and develops his narratives to maximize the emotional involvement of his readers. Take his use of a simple bowl of chicken soup. While most people are vaguely aware that chicken soup comes from chickens, wherever there is chicken soup, there is a story of the life and death of a chicken. In *A Story about a Real Man,* the hero Alexei, behind enemy lines and unable to walk, is given chicken soup by an old woman in a village. Polevoy weaves in a moving tale: the Germans have shot her whole family, all except for one chicken. The chicken hid up in the loft whenever the Germans came, and was therefore nicknamed Partisanka by the villagers. To feed Alexei chicken soup, the old woman must kill Partisanka. Thus the giving of chicken soup to a soldier becomes the occasion of a sacrifice, if not a sacrament.

Atrocity Tales

Seen in the above light, the accounts by Polevoy — and many other propagandists — of German atrocities become rather more transparent. For instance, it is not enough for Polevoy to write that the Germans requisitioned the University of Kharkov. He reported that they turned the buildings into a breeding ground for pigs, covering the parquet floors with straw and droppings.[18] In the same "Soviet war correspondent's notebook" that contains the Kharkov tale, Polevoy describes a school in Moldavia which the Germans took over and converted into a stable, amusing themselves in the schoolyard by setting up a shooting gallery, playing soccer with the school's globes, "drinking the alcohol out of jars containing zoological specimens and roasting pork on a fire fed by school books."[19]

Needless to say, Polevoy was in his element at Nuremberg, where libellous lies of the same kind as he churned out for the Soviet public were given the seal of authenticity by the Allied judges. He was one of the

most eminent writers of an entire corps of Soviet journalists, which included the notorious Ilya Ehrenburg. His later book *The Final Reckoning: Nuremberg Diaries*, based on his notes from the trial, contain harrowing descriptions, crafted with loving care, of such discredited evidence against the Germans as "human soap" and a head claimed to have been shrunken and turned into a curio in a concentration camp.

Note the consistency of Polevoy's technique in describing the head:

> A human head was standing on an elegant marble base under a bell-glass. Yes, a human head with long, swept back hair, shrunk in some incomprehensible way to the size of a large fist. It was apparently one of the ornaments and knickknacks made by some of the monstrous "craftsmen" in a concentration camp, which were then presented as souvenirs to distinguished visitors by the camp chief. The prisoner who caught the gentleman — or lady — visitor's eye was killed, the brain and crushed bones of the head were extracted by some technique through the neck, the head was shrunken by some process, stuffed and mounted as a statuette or ornament.[20]

And see how he breathes life into the faded soap and skin lies:

> On the Prosecutor's instructions, all the sheets were removed from the display stands and tables. We saw a display of human skin in various stages of processing: freshly flayed, cleaned of flesh, tanned and, finally, furnished leather articles — elegant ladies' shoes, handbags, briefcases, blotting pads and even jackets. Boxes of different kinds of soap were also lying on the tables: ordinary soap, household soap, baby soap, industrial soap and fragrant toilet soap in attractive colorful wrappings."[21]

The Nuremberg Trials: Final Reckoning is a very readable book, and certainly captures much of the spirit of the trials. As Polevoy wrote in a brief introduction, however, a key motive in his writing it over twenty years after Nuremberg was to combat a resurgence of revisionism: "Recently, however, books have begun to appear in the West whose authors have attempted to cast doubt on the justice meted out by the International Military Tribunal, and have even declared the trial a historical mistake."[22]

'Check Up on Me'

Young Boris Nikaelovich Kampov may have chosen the pen name of Boris Polevoy to evoke the classical nineteenth century Russian writer Nikolai Polevoi. Nikolai Polevoi wrote fiction based on famous historical events, changing and distorting facts to fit his story. In the introduction to *An Oath at the Holy Sepulcher*, an historical novel by Nikolai Polevoi first published in 1832, the earlier classical Polevoi provides this imaginary dialogue between the reader and the author:

> Reader: Should we believe everything you will tell us? You speak of a true story, but perhaps, all this will turn out to be fiction.
>
> Nikolai Polevoi: What is the problem? Check [up on] me.[23]

Advice to be heeded from the original Polevoi: for it applies not only to the writings of the Communist journalist and novelist who adopted his name, but also to many another chronicler of war — past, present, and future.

Notes

1. Boris Polevoi, *The Final Reckoning: Nuremberg Diaries* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), pp. 113, 161.
2. Sometimes transliterated from the Cyrillic alphabet to English as Polevoi or Polowej.
3. http://www.fpp.co.uk/Auschwitz/docs/Pravda020245.html
4. Vadim Kozhevnikov, "In Memoriam, Boris Polevoy," in *Soviet Literature*, Nov.1981, pp. 189-191.
5. Boris Polevoi, *Final Reckoning*, dust jacket notes.
6. *Boris Polevoy*, a ship owned by the Metz Container Line, which maintains offices in Beirut, Montreal, Egypt, Romania, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere. http:www.metz.ca/boris.htm
7. David Finko, *That Song*, one-act opera after Boris Polevoy. Finko, a Russian-Jewish emigre, has taught music at several American universities, including Yale, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Texas.
8. "Conversation with Comrade Fidel, February 20, 1974" at: http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/cb/cuba/castro/1974/19740220
9. Irwin Weil, *Gorky, His Literary Development and Influence on Soviet Intellectual Life* (New York: Random House, 1966).
10. Otto Hoetzsch, *The Evolution of Russia* (London: Thames and Hudson,1966), pp. 196-7.
11. Weil, *Gorky*, p.116.
12. Boris Polevoi, *To the Last Breath* (New York: Hutchinson

and Co., 1945). Should the reader wonder, this book has been classified as non-fiction by the Library of Congress.

13. Ibid., p. 46.
14. S. Dangulov, "Boris Polevoy: New Works," *Soviet Literature*, Feb. 1980.
15. Boris Polevoi, *A Story about a Real Man*, first published in English in 1952 by Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow. Reprinted in 1970 by Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut.
16. *Soviet Literature*, vol. 4 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1968), pp. 152-6.
17. Ibid., p. 154.
18. Boris Polevoi, *From Belgorod to the Carpathians: From a Soviet War Correspondent's Notebook* (New York: Hutchinson and Company Ltd., 1945). This is a war diary that covers the period August 1943 to April 1944.
19. Ibid., p. 144.
20. *Final Reckoning*, p. 112.
21. Ibid., p. 112.
22. Ibid., p. 53.
23. Dan Ungurianu, "Fact and Fiction in the Romantic Historical Novel," *The Russian Review*, July 1998, pp. 380-4.

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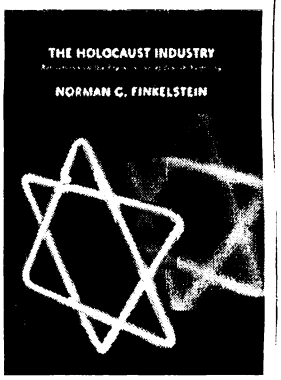

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The Gulag: Communism's Penal Colonies Revisited

DAN MICHAELS

During the twentieth century it became common practice for nations to detain citizens whose loyalty to the state was considered unreliable or suspect in times of war or "national emergency." To sequester such persons Britain, the United States, and Germany all established centers, variously called (often depending on who won and who lost) relocation centers, detention centers, labor camps, concentration camps, or death camps. Depending on circumstances, the treatment of inmates varied from benign to cruel. Such facilities in these countries were, however, temporary measures undertaken during times of national peril. Only in the Soviet Union, where such camps were collectively known as the Gulag (an acronym in Russian for the Main Directorate of Corrective Labor Camps and Colonies), were they a permanent and integral part of the government.

Beginning in the 1970s, British researcher Robert Conquest and Russian Nobel laureate (and former Gulag detainee) Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn did much to alert the world to the horrors of the USSR's vast penal empire. Conquest's readership has been limited largely to historians and the better educated, while today Solzhenitsyn's monumental *Gulag Archipelago* is scarcely read at all, except in a condensed version. Over the past decade, however, their pioneer work has been supported and elaborated on by serious studies compiled by survivors of the Soviet camps and by Russian, French, and German scholars. The most important of these (and the basis for this essay) are: *The Gulag Handbook* by Jacques Rossi; *Sistema ispraviltel'no-trudovykh lagerey v SSSR. 1923-1960* (The System of Corrective Labor Camps in the USSR, 1923-1960), by a team of Russian researchers; Ralf Stettner's recent study of the Gulag under Stalin; former Gulag administrator D.S. Baldaev's *Gulag Zeichnungen* (Sketches from the Gulag); Avraham Shifrin's somewhat older *Guidebook to Prisons and Concentration Camps of the Soviet Union;* and the powerful *Black Book of Communism*, by Stéphane Courtois.[1]

For whatever reason, American researchers have seemed content to relegate the "Gulag archipelago" to the dustbin of history. Pitifully for the reputation of the United States and Great Britain, all too many of their scholars, writers, artists, and politicians ignored, or even sought to justify, the Soviet camps when Communism ruled Russia. Their infrequent condemnation of the Soviet penal system was all too often on behalf of Communists who had fallen from favor. In 1944 Franklin Delano Roosevelt's vice president, Henry Wallace, visited one of the worst and most brutal of the Soviet penal camps, Magadan, lauding its sadistic commander, Ivan Nikishov, and describing Magadan as "idyllic."

Workings of the Gulag

Organizationally the Gulag was subordinated to the

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The effects of confinement at hard labor, with its poor diet, exposure to the elements, and abuse by guards, are clearly evident in this picture of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn taken at a Gulag camp in 1946. He would spend seven more years in the camps, and three additional years of internal exile. Solzhenitsyn's later writings on the Gulag, including the fictional *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and *The First Circle* and the literary-historiographical *Gulag Archipelago*, helped him win the Nobel Prize in 1970 and four years later resulted in his expulsion from the Soviet Union. In 1994, after the collapse of the Communist regime, Solzhenitsyn returned to Russia.

secret police entity of the day (successively, Cheka, GPU, OGPU, NKVD, MVD, and KGB, from the last of which emanate many of the leaders of today's Russian Federation). The founder of the Soviet secret police, Feliks Dzerzhinsky, expressed the guiding principle of the Cheka in 1918: "We represent in ourselves organized terror — this must be said very clearly." All subsequent Soviet governments have rigorously observed that principle. In one consequence of that rigor, conditions in the camps of Communist Russia were typically far more brutal than those of the dreaded Siberian exile under the Tsars.

If France had one notorious penal colony — Devil's Island — the Soviet Union had hundreds. Of several thousand work camps of various types, more than five hundred were officially ITL (for "ispravitel'no-trudovoy lager"), corrective labor camps and penal colonies. The first of these was established in 1917; eventually the ITL camps extended across the breadth of the USSR, from the severe arctic conditions of the far north to the scorched plains of Central Asia. Or, as Solzhenitsyn put it: "from the Cold Pole at Oy-Myakon to the copper mines of Dzhezkazgan."

Since the camp system was essential to the Soviet economy, the inmates were put to work in every aspect of hard labor — in railroad construction, road building, canal building, forestry, mining, agriculture, construction sites, etc., under conditions that were usually inhuman and unhealthy, and oftentimes deadly Women, though housed in separate barracks, often shared the same work camps as the men — and worked side by side with them at the same labor. There were special camps for children, for mothers with babies, and other exceptional cases. Psychiatric wards (psikhbol'nitsy) "treated" other intractable "enemies of the people."

In 1943, with the "Great Patriotic War" raging, the Communists introduced an even severer category of labor camp, the "katorga" (hard labor camp), within the ITL system. Prisoners assigned to a katorga were assigned the hardest work and received the lowest rations and the least medical attention. (The word "katorga" stems from in Tsarist times, when hard labor, along with "ssylka," or Siberian exile, were standard, though much milder, punishments.)

As was the practice in the Soviet civilian sector in general, and long predating the German use of similar slogans in their concentration camps, the importance and joys of work were proclaimed and extolled by countless slogans posted in the camps: "Work is a matter of honor, fame, courage, and heroism"; "Shock work is the fastest way to freedom"; or, more ominously, "No work, no food."

The basic daily food ration (the "payka") ranged from 400 to 800 grams of bread, which accounted for more than half the prisoner's daily calories (1200-1300). This amount varied, depending on whether the prisoner was a shock worker or a Stakhanovite, an invalid, in isolation, etc. The most productive workers received a food bonus of fish, potatoes, porridge, or vegetables to supplement his bread. (Coincidentally, the American Morgenthau Plan for occupied Germany called for the allotment of about the same number of calories [1300] a day per German.) The UN World Health Organization sets the minimum requirements for heavy labor at from 3100-3900 calories per day.

The inmate population reflected a cross-section of the USSR: Christian and Muslim clergymen, "kulaks" (or independent farmers), political dissidents, common criminals, "economic criminals," the remnants of the old elite, Communists who had fallen from favor, ethnic minorities, the homeless, "unpersons," "hooligans," and persons who had been, once too often, tardy at work.

Within the camps of the Gulag, inmate society came to be broken down into categories that depended on the prisoner's particular crime. Most political prisoners or counterrevolutionaries were referred to as "58ers" for having violated Article 58 of the criminal code; common criminals were called "urki" or "blatnyaki"; less violent criminals accused of violating some aspect of the civil code were categorized as "bytoviki"; individuals accused of undermining Soviet economic laws were referred to as subversives or pests — "vrediteli" in Russian; trustees or "pridurki" in the camps, those most likely to survive their imprisonment, acted as camp service personnel. All inmates were referred to as "zeki," the acronym for the Russian word for prisoner.

Little known today, Naftali Frenkel, like Solzhenitsyn was a prisoner in a Soviet penal camp. While an inmate, however, the one-time Jewish timber magnate devised a system of labor exploitation that led to the deaths of millions of prisoners in Soviet penal camps, and earned him a life of ease as a high-ranking officer in the NKVD. Solzhenitsyn wrote of Frenkel in *The Gulag Archipelago: Two*: "I have the feeling that he really hated this country!"

Reform, Soviet Style

Of all those who helped devise and perfect the slave labor system of the Gulag, special mention must be made of Naftaly Aronovich Frenkel. Frenkel, a Jew born in Turkey in 1883, had been a prosperous merchant there, but after the Bolshevik revolution he moved — as did an appreciable number of Jews — to the Soviet Union. Based in Odessa as an agent of the State Political Administration, Frenkel was responsible for the acquisition and confiscation of gold from the wealthier classes. The unscrupulous Frenkel was unable to resist this temptation, however, and in 1927 was arrested, on orders of the Moscow central office, for skimming off too much gold for himself. Convicted of economic crimes, he was sent to the Solovetsky Special Purpose Camp (or SLON, as it was designated by the Soviet bureaucracy), a bleak Arctic penal colony. Frenkel's special talent for improving inmate work efficiency was quickly noticed by the camp officials there, and it was not long before he was ordered to explain his ideas and methods to Stalin personally. His main proposal was to link a prisoner's food ration, especially hot food, to his production, essentially substituting hunger for the knout as the main work incentive. Frenkel had also observed that a prisoner's most productive work is usually done in the first three months of his captivity, after which he or she was in so debilitated a state that the output of the inmate population could be kept high only by removing (killing off) the exhausted prisoners and replacing them with fresh inmates. Another method of stimulating enthusiasm for work among prisoners — and at the same time culling the camp population by killing off the weak — was quite simple. When the prisoners were called out on a work detail, they fell into line. The last man in to line up would be shot as a laggard ("dokhodyaga"), one weakened enough to be useless for work. These policies would ensure a constant inflow of new prisoners, providing fresh labor while weeding out opposition to Stalin and his party.

So pleased was Stalin with Frenkel's ideas on the efficient exploitation of inmate labor that he made him construction chief of the White Sea Canal project, and later of the BAM railroad project. In 1937 Stalin appointed Frenkel head of the newly founded Main Administration of Railroad Construction Camps (GULZhDS). In that capacity, Frenkel was called upon to provide railroad transport facilities to the Red Army in the 1939-40 "Winter War" against Finland, and for

the duration of Soviet participation in the Second World War. He was eventually awarded the Order of Lenin three times, named a Hero of Socialist Labor, and promoted to the rank of general in the NKVD.

The methods instituted by Frenkel in building the White Sea-Baltic Sea Canal became the standard operating procedures for most subsequent labor camps, including the BAM (Baltic-Amur Magistral) railroad project, the Dalstroy (Far East Construction), Vorkuta, Kolyma, Magadan, and countless other hell holes. Working on the BAM project after the war, the inmates noted that many of the rails were marked "made in Canada" — a reminder of the aid given by the Western powers to support the Soviet war effort.

Welcome Guests

The number of inmates varied over time. Thus, for example, there were roughly 300,000 prisoners in Soviet labor camps as early as 1932, a million in 1935, and two million by 1940. (President Roosevelt officially recognized the Soviet Union in 1933, extending the hand of friendship to its leader just as Stalin was starving and imprisoning millions of his subjects in Ukraine and Russia.) During the war, Stalin displayed his own brand of clemency by permitting some one million inmates to serve in various Red Army penal units. These were employed in clearing out minefields, not infrequently by walking through them at gunpoint, and in other hazardous tasks. Nevertheless, the population of the Soviet concentration camp system rose precipitously in 1945-46.

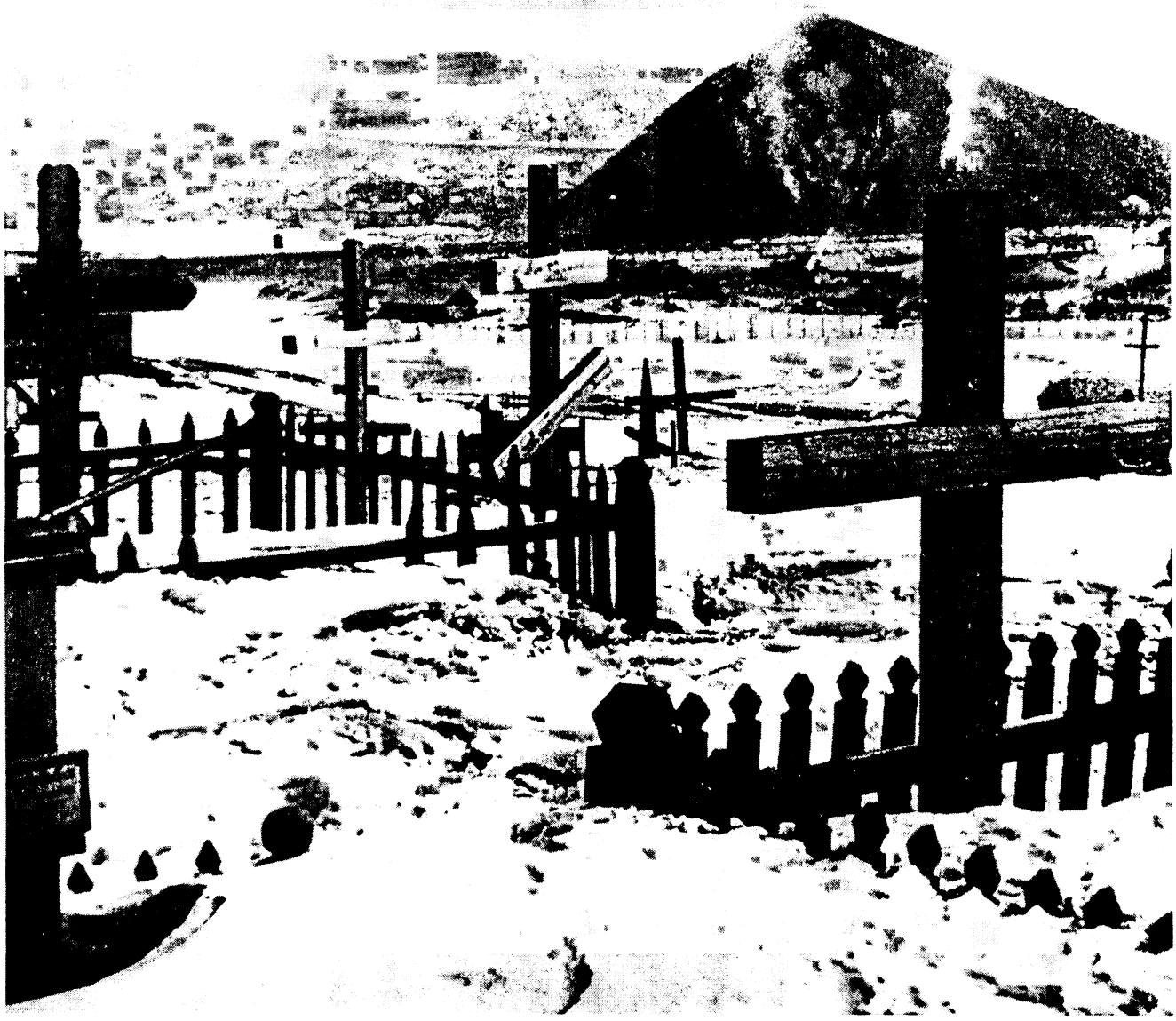
From 1939 on, the Gulag filled up with nationals from the USSR's enemies: Finns, Poles, Germans, Italians, Romanians, and Japanese, many of whom were held for years after 1945. Although, technically, German prisoners of war were under the jurisdiction of GUPVI (Main Directorate for POW and Internee Affairs), they were nonetheless used no differently than other Gulag inmates. Indeed, in the first few years of the war the death rate for POWs exceeded that for non-POWs in the camps. Comparatively few German were taken alive before Stalingrad.Most were shot out of hand, many of them mutilated. Of the 95,000 German POWs captured at Stalingrad, only 5,000 survived to return home. Of the dead, some forty thousand did not survive the march from Stalingrad to the Beketovka camp, where 42,000 more perished of hunger and disease. Particularly murderous treatment was inflicted on SS POWs, many of whom, along with remnants of the Vlasov forces, were imprisoned and died on Wrangel Island.

By the war's end, the USSR held 3.4 million German soldiers prisoner. Under the provisions of the Yalta Agreement, the U.S. and U.K. had agreed to the use of German POWs in the Soviet Gulag as "reparations-in-kind." Thus, rather than repatriate them to their homeland, Stalin began incorporating this captive human booty into the work camps in the summer of 1945. Recognizing that the German prisoners of war were productive workers, Stalin ordered that they be given food rations proportionate to their work. The ration included 600 grams of black bread every day, spaghetti, a little meat, sugar, vegetables, and rice. Officers got somewhat more, while, naturally, Axis "war criminals" got less. Nonetheless, between 1941 and 1952, almost a million German POWs died in the camps. The last of the surviving POWs (10,000 men) were released from the Soviet Union in 1955, after a decade of forced labor. Approximately 1.5 million German soldiers from the Second World War are still listed as missing in action. Of an additional 875,000 German civilians abducted and transported to the camps, almost half perished.

When the war ended in May 1945, British and U.S. civilian authorities ordered their military forces in Germany to deliver to the Communists great numbers of former residents of the USSR, including men who had taken up arms with the Germans against the Soviets, prisoners of war, forced and voluntary workers in the German wartime economy, and numerous persons who had left Russia and established different citizenship many years before. This "repatriation" of 4.2 million ethnic Russians and 1.6 million Russian POWs from defeated Germany was augmented, as noted above, by a great influx of German POWs and the arrival of large numbers of civilians abducted or deported from Germany and Eastern Europe. Tens of thousands of Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians were deported to Soviet camps, to be replaced in their homelands by Soviet settlers. While most repatriated ethnic Russian civilians, chiefly the women and children, were eventually reincorporated into Soviet life, the Russian POWs and the Vlasov men were put under the jurisdiction of SMERSH (Death to Spies), which sentenced about a third of a million to serve from ten to twenty years in the Gulag. In 1947, swollen by the dictates of Yalta and by Operation Keelhaul, the total number of Gulag prisoners hit its peak at about nine million.

After Stalin

After the war, the most wretched and hazardous



A cemetery at a coal mine in the Vorkuta complex of penal camps, 1956. The Latin crosses may mark the graves of some of the tens of thousands of Poles, many of them veterans of the underground Home Army, deported by the Soviets at the end of the Second World War. Some estimates put the mortality rate of the Poles in the Vorkuta mines at fifty percent.

work continued to be relegated to the inmates of the Gulag. Thus, under the direct supervision of secret police chief Lavrenty Beria, thousands of Gulag inmates were used to support the Soviet nuclear bomb project by mining uranium and preparing test facilities on Novaya Zemlya, Vaygach Island, Semipalatinsk, and dozens of other sites. Later, the Soviet navy employed Gulag prisoners to rid decommissioned nuclear-powered submarines of radioactivity.

In 1953, the year of Stalin's death, the Gulag held around 2.7 million prisoners. Over the next two years the number of inmates fell rapidly — which is not to say that the Gulag withered away under Stalin's successors.

Danchik Sergeyevich Baldaev, an MVD major who worked in the Gulag from 1951 until his retirement in 1981, has published a book of drawings depicting the travails and agonies of Russians and others declared "enemies of the people" in the post-Stalin Gulag.

Baldaev's book is arranged thematically, with sections on camp organization, tortures and cruelties, sex, food and housing, climatic conditions, common and political criminals, and so on. Despite his own past and the horrors of his topic, he succeeds in depicting the entire pathology of the Communist camps and their overlords in an almost clinical manner, starkly and without theatrics.

As Baldaev makes clear, while officially the KGB administered the operation of the camps, unofficially, inside the barracks, common criminals (murderers, rapists, and psychopaths of every variety) ruled, using and abusing the women and the weak. Calling themselves "vory v zakone" (literally, thieves within the law, the type of which is a ceremonially installed criminal leader who decides disputes and divides spoils), these thugs were Mafiosi of the lowest type.

Women in the Gulag were preyed upon from all quarters. During their transport to the camps they were often raped on the transport ships or in the railroad cars. Upon arrival at their destination they would be paraded naked in front of the camp officials, who would select those they fancied, promising easier work in exchange for sexual favors. These officials, according to Baldaev, preferred German, Latvian, and Estonian women, who most likely would never see home again, over native Russian women, who might. Women not selected by the camp officials became "prizes" for male (and sometimes lesbian) criminals. Besides the everyday tortures of starvation, work exhaustion, exposure to the cold of the far north, and physical abuse, the more intractable prisoners of either sex might be subjected to isolation, impalement, genital mutilation, or, more mercifully, a bullet in the back of the head.

Empire of Death

It is estimated that more than thirty million prisoners entered the Gulag during the half century in which it flourished. Not all of them perished, of course. Short termers, especially, might endure their five-year sentence and be released. In some cases, however, prisoners who had served their time in the Gulag were denied return to their homes, and forced to live out the remainder of their lives in towns near the camp. Robert Conquest, who of Western scholars has done the most to investigate and to reveal the crimes of the Soviet regime, estimates that one out of every three new inmates died during the first year of imprisonment. Only half made it through the third year. Conquest estimates that during the "Great Terror" of the late 1930s alone, there were six million arrests, two million executions, and another two million deaths from other causes in the camps. It is Conquest's belief that, by the time of Stalin's death in 1953, about twelve million had perished in the Gulag. Certain investigators, such as the late Andrei Sakharov, have put the figure much higher, from 15 to 20 million. These apparent discrepancies result from honest historians studying crimes, committed in a closed society, of a magnitude never before seen, without reliable documentation.

A grotesque ritual evolved for the thorough disposal of the wasted bodies of inmates who had succumbed to hunger, exhaustion, exposure, and malnutrition. A wooden marker with the deceased inmate's identification number was affixed to his left leg, and gold teeth or fillings pried out. To ensure that the death was not feigned, the skull of the inmate was smashed with a hammer, or a metal spike driven into the chest. The near naked corpse would then be removed from the camp area and buried in an unmarked grave.

Voices against Oblivion

In recent years various German groups have, with the cooperation of the Russians, been establishing memorials for the German civilians and soldiers who died in the Soviet Union. Recently, a Russian Jew, Aleksandr Gutman, produced a documentary film in which he interviewed four German women from East Prussia who as young girls had been raped by Red Army troops, then transported soon after the war to a particularly hellish outpost of the Gulag, no. 517, near Petrozavodsk in Karelia. Of the 1,000 girls and women who were transported to that camp, 522 died within six months of their arrival. These women were among tens of thousands of German civilians, men and women, deported, with the acquiescence of the Western powers, to the Soviet Union as German "reparations-in-kind" for slave labor. One of the women interviewed by Gutman remarks: "While the diary of Anne Frank is known throughout the world, we carry our memories in our hearts." Recently, German philanthropists established a memorial cemetery for those women who perished in slave pen no. 517.[2]

After rejection by numerous film festivals due to its "controversial" nature, Gutman's *Journey Back to Youth* (Russian title: *Puteshestviye v yunost)* was finally accepted by the 34th International Film Festival in Houston, Texas, where it won the top prize — the Platinum Award — for 2001 (the film subsequently earned the U.S. International Film and Video Festival's Gold

Camera award). When Gutman attempted to show the documentary in New York City, however, it opened and closed to such taunts as: "He should be killed for making such a movie. Shame, a Jew describing the sufferings of Germans."

The Perversion of Memory

Today we Americans, from children to dotards, are bombarded with Holocaustiana, a saturation that borders on, and in some case results in, Holocaustomania. Yet rarely are we informed of the cruel purposes and the sadistic workings of the Soviet labor camps. More than half a century after the end of the Second World War, the U.S. Justice Department maintains a special branch — the Office of Special Investigations — exclusively dedicated to the investigation, prosecution, and deportation of former Axis soldiers and officials. Most of those who have been prosecuted served as low-ranking guards at wartime German camps. But no such American office has ever been created to hunt out the officials who headed and ran the Communists' camps. The most recent book on the Gulag, Smirnov's *System of Corrective Labor Camps,* lists more than five hundred camps with their administrative officers through the 1960s. More than a few may well be U.S. citizens today. If our leaders were suddenly to be fired with the same passion for pursuing Soviet persecutors that they have for tracking old Nazis and alleged terrorists, Smirnov's book might be the place to start.

While many of Germany's concentration camps have been preserved (some would say enshrined), and are evidently intended to be maintained in perpetuity as memorials to their former inmates and to the wickedness, not only of their jailers, but of the entire German people, the far more extensive Soviet Gulag camp system has in the past decade continued to disappear from the Russian landscape, and from collective memory.[3]

Recent attempts of former inmates of the Soviet labor camps to establish (at the very least) a museum of the Gulag have been frustrated by higher authorities. As Yuri Pivovarov, director of the Institute of Social Science Research at the Russian academy of Sciences, puts it: "People simple do not equate the ethical and moral horrors and shame of Nazism with those of Communism." Many who now object to the idea of a museum were formerly high-ranking Communist officials, who today steer Russia into the New World Order. Then, too, the Soviet Union was never conquered, and thus never subject to conquerors' demands.

Among the Forgotten

Not long ago the well-known British travel writer, Colin Thubron, trekked across Siberia. During his journey Thubron deliberately departed the usual itinerary to view the ruins of two notorious Gulag camps: Vorkuta and Kolyma.[4] In his recent book *In Siberia*, Thubron describes them with a grim lyricism:

> Kolyma was fed every year by sea with tens of thousands of prisoners, mostly innocent. Where they landed, they built a port, then the city of Magadan, then the road inland to the mines where they perished. People still call it the 'Road of Bones.' ... Kolyma itself was called 'the Planet,' detached from all reality beyond its own — death.

Of his visit to the dread Vorkuta, Thubron writes:

> Then we reached the shell of Mine 17. Here, in 1943, was the first of Vorkuta's katorga death-camps. Within a year these compounds numbered thirteen out of Vorkuta's thirty: their purpose was to kill their inmates. Through winters in which the temperature plunged to -40 F, and the purga blizzards howled, the katorzhane lived in lightly boarded tents sprinkled with sawdust, on a floor of mossy permafrost. They worked twelve hours a day, without respite, hauling coal-trucks, and within three weeks they were broken. A rare survivor described them turned to robots, their grey-yellow faces rimmed with ice and bleeding cold tears. They ate in silence, standing packed together, seeing no one. Some work-brigades flailed themselves on in a bid for extra food, but the effort was too much, the extra too little. Within a year 28,000 of them were dead ... Then I came to a solitary brick building enclosing a range of cramped rooms. They were isolation cells. Solzhenitsyn wrote that after ten days' incarceration, during which a prisoner might be deprived even of clothing, his constitution was wrecked, and after fifteen he was dead.

Departing Vorkuta, Thubron stumbled on a stone on which a message had been scratched. It read:

"I was exiled in 1949, and my father died here in 1942. Remember us."

Notes

1. Jacques Rossi, *The Gulag Handbook* (New York: Paragon House, 1989); M.B. Smirnov, et al., *Sistema ispravil-tel'no-trudovykh lagerey v SSSR. 1923-1960* (Moscow: Zven'ya, 1998); Ralf Stettner, *Archipel Gulag: Stalins Zwangslager: Terrorinstrument und Wirtschaftsgigant* [*The Gulag Archipelago: Instrument of Terror and Economic Giant*] (Munich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1996); Danchik Sergeyevich Baldaev, *Gulag Zeichnungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1993); Avraham Shifrin, *The First Guidebook to Prisons and Concentration Camps of the Soviet Union* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982); and Stéphane Courtois, et al., *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (London: Harvard University Press, 1999).
2. Aleksandra Sviridova, in *V novom sverte* (In the New World), a Russian-language newspaper published in New York, May 18-24, 2001, pp. 14-15.
3. Only recently, however, Dr. Judith Pallot, a geography lecturer at Oxford University, reported that at least 120 "forest colonies" (forced labor camps) dating from the Stalin era are still being used to house tens of thousands, all of them common criminals as opposed to the mix of former years. The camps Dr. Pallot reports on are located in the Perm region of the Northern Urals. The average yearly temperature in that region is about minus 1° C (c. 30.8° F), although during the long winter from October to May it falls as low as minus 40° C (c. -40° F). As in Czarist times, many prisoners choose to remain as settlers in the vicinity of the camps when their sentences have ended. Michael McCarthy, "Thousands of Russian Prisoners Are Still Suffering in the Gulag Archipelago," in http://www.independent.co.uk.
4. Colin Thubron, *In Siberia* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999).

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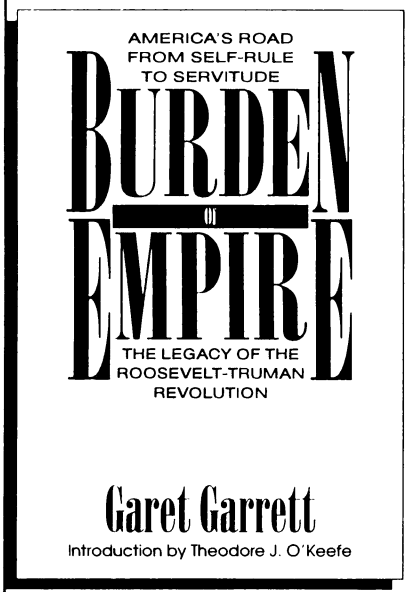

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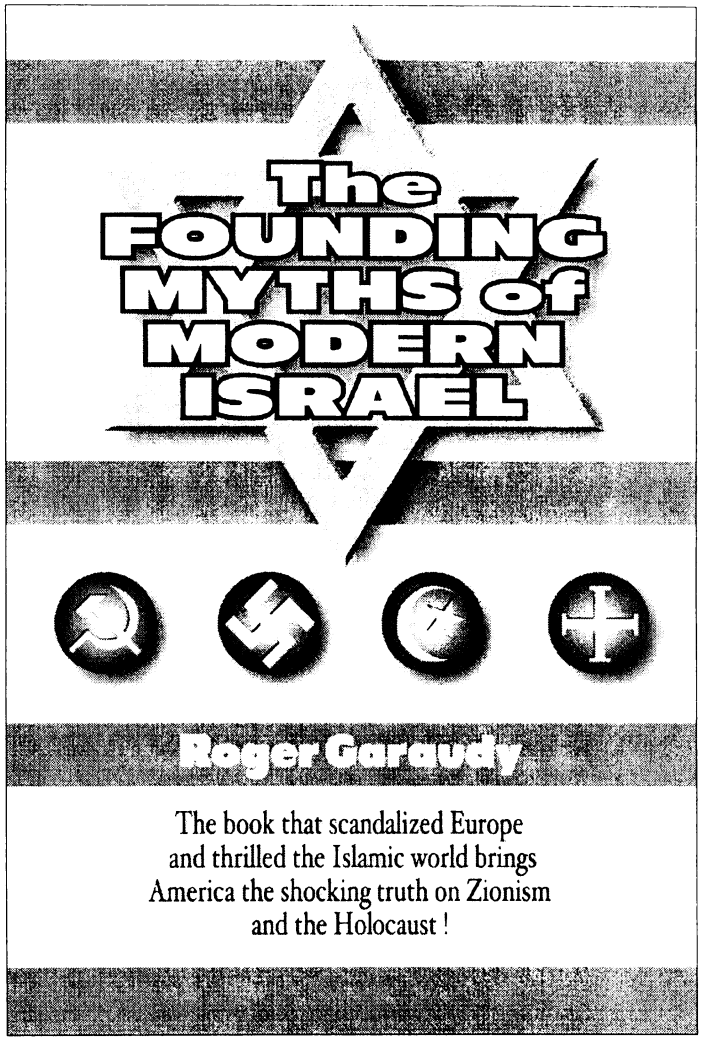

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For decades Roger Garaudy was prominent in the French Communist Party, making a name for himself as a Communist deputy in the French National Assembly, and as a leading Marxist intellectual and theoretician. Later he broke with Communism, eventually becoming a Muslim.

When *Founding Myths* first appeared in France, it touched off a storm of controversy among intellectuals and a furious uproar in the media. Soon Garaudy was charged with violating France's notorious Gayssot law, which makes it a crime to "contest" the "crimes against humanity" as defined by the Nuremberg Tribunal of 1945-46. A Paris court found him guilty and fined him $40,000. His trial and conviction for Holocaust heresy prompted wide international support, above all from across the Arab and Muslim world.

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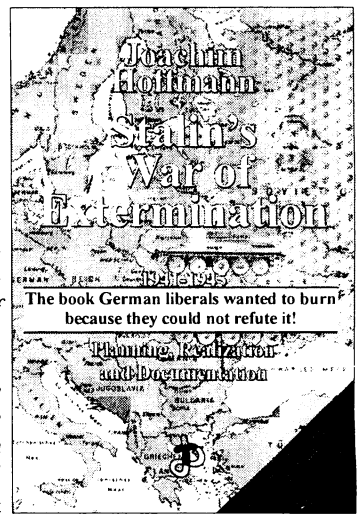

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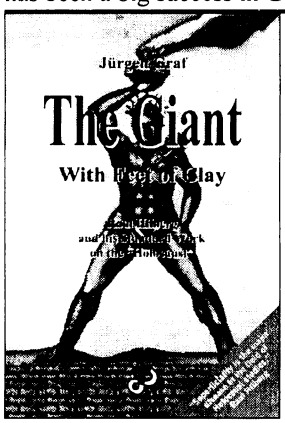

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A Holocaust Expert Moves from Moral Certainty toward Open Debate

The Case for Auschwitz: Evidence from the Irving Trial by Robert Jan van Pelt. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2002. Hardcover. Index, bibliography, illustrations.

REVIEWED BY SAMUEL CROWELL

When the British historian David Irving brought Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin Books to court for libel in early 2000, the defense submitted a number of expert opinions by historians in order to buttress the claim that Irving was a "Holocaust denier." Christopher Browning wrote a brief but professional report on the Reinhardt camps that, although arriving at conclusions revisionists would reject, avoided personal attacks on Irving. On the other hand, Robert Jan van Pelt, of the University of Canada at Waterloo, contributed a huge and diffuse opus concerning the Auschwitz concentration camp as an "extermination camp" with a highly personalized approach directed at Irving. The present book is a revised version of that text.

It must be admitted that in the revision Professor van Pelt's book has been much improved. Gone are the obscure philosophizing and the attacks on Irving. Gone too are the quotations from *Penguin Island* and *Alice in Wonderland* that gave us an Auschwitz embellished with whimsy. The report's most famous passages, concerning the "moral certainty" of its author's opinion, along with his assertion that the holes in the roof of the basement of Crematorium II had been filled in prior to being blown up, are now hard to find (though far easier to locate than the elusive holes themselves).

Nevertheless, whatever the changes in the successive drafts, it must be granted that this is an important book. First, because it represents the first serious attempt to discuss the arguments of revisionists; second, because the treatment of the arguments, while incomplete, is thorough, civil, and touches upon the writings of a number of prominent researchers, including Faurisson, Butz, Stäglich, Rudolf, and this reviewer. (A significant omission is that of Carlo Mattogno, perhaps because Mattogno's authoritative analyses of crematories operation are not easily refuted.)

Because van Pelt indicates (p. 138) that he structured his original report as a response to my short monograph "The Gas Chamber of Sherlock Holmes" (published to date only on the Internet),[1] and because Van Pelt's structure is largely intact, I will frame my review of van Pelt's book in terms of issues of particular importance to my own research interests and writings, recognizing that other revisionist researchers will find their own points of departure.

From Baker Street to the Himmelstrasse

In early 1997 I sketched out a brief polemic that would be designed to argue on behalf of freedom of speech for Holocaust revisionists. Delayed by other research and writing throughout that year, "The Gas Chamber of Sherlock Holmes" was finally posted on the website of the Committee for the Open Debate on the Holocaust (CODOH) in December 1997. It was revised and slightly expanded a year later, pursuant to Bradley Smith's intention to mail several dozen copies to assorted historians and opinion makers in order to influence the debate then raging over censoring revisionists. Further revisions, in 2000, were made available to the French scholar Jean Plantin, who has published several chapters in French translation, but "Sherlock" remains very much a work in progress.

This background needs to be kept in mind. Notwithstanding van Pelt's opinion that my monograph "raised negationist discourse to a new level" (p. 140), it must be said at the outset that my purpose in writing it was not, in fact, to offer a comprehensive rebuttal of the mass gassing claim, but rather merely to provide a synoptic review of the problem.

The main purpose of "Sherlock" was to show that the revisionist interpretation on the subject of mass gassing was possible, and since possible, a particularly unworthy candidate for censorship. A concern for developing strategies for overcoming the taboo surrounding the Holocaust, as well as the existing censorship laws, has been the unspoken hallmark of all my

Samuel Crowell is the pseudonym of a graduate of the University of California (Berkeley). There he studied philosophy, foreign languages (including German, Polish, Russian, and Hungarian), and modern European history. Crowell continued his studies in history at Columbia University, and taught on the college level for six years.

revisionist writings.

Although "Sherlock" began as a brief polemic, I can understand that it might be seen as a more substantial piece. But while the work may be a fair survey of the gas chamber problem, it makes no claims to comprehensiveness and thus cannot be legitimately criticized on that account. Indeed, many features still indicate its primarily polemical and rhetorical origin. Its fanciful title was chosen to attract a British audience, at a time when censorship beckoned there. It was deliberately plotted to surprise the reader. And it was constructed to provide support to the two main revisionist conceptions that must be true if there were no homicidal gassings in the Second World War. First, that the manifold testimonies can be shown to be interconnected and to go back to rumors and propaganda; second, that the documentary evidence that appears to discuss mass gassings is in fact about other things.

Hence, the two main parts of van Pelt's book depend on the issues of testimony and material evidence, and I will discuss each of these in turn.

Testimonies

The Holocaust gassing claim is unusual in that it is comprised of much testimonial evidence, and a rather small sheaf of documentary evidence that is suggestive but never explicit. That is the core of the historiographical problem of the gas chambers, as Faurisson recognized long ago.

The basic rule in evaluating testimony, and indeed any historical evidence, is that it be as near as possible to the events described; it becomes distinctly less valuable the farther from the event. There are two main reasons for this: first, because there is a natural tendency to embroider and embellish memory, and, second, the possibility of cross-pollination from other accounts increases with the passage of time.

Therefore, the first thing to be done in order to examine eyewitness claims concerning mass gassings is to arrange them chronologically. The next step requires the identification of elements in the claims that might constitute evidence of such cross-pollination. I identified several of these elements, of which the shower-gas-burning sequence was the most pervasive.

The shower-gas-burning sequence is the core of the narrative: if it can be shown by other means (e.g., documents or forensics) to reflect reality, then the revisionists are wrong, and the point must be conceded. But if the claim does not reflect reality, the story must have taken shape somehow. The question is then: where and by what means? Two possible sources occurred to me at first: a widespread anxiety about disinfection procedures, which involved simultaneous fumigation (or gassing) of possessions, and showers for their owners; and similar fears in the 1930s over the possibility of gas warfare against civilians. What I had not anticipated was my discovery that the roots of both sources for the shower-gas-burning narrative could be traced back to the beginning of the twentieth century, if not earlier. It should be added that my approach differs from that of most revisionists, for I view the evolution of, and belief in, the gassing claims as more the spontaneous result of cultural and psychological forces (such as those which generate urban legends in our own time) rather than as a consequence of deliberate falsehood.

Even if a general anxiety about poison gas and specific anxieties over what fumigation and communal showering might entail, joined to a horror of cremation, was found to have given rise to the gas chamber stories, however, that in itself would not suffice to solve the problem of how the gassing stories were disseminated. There were undoubtedly many rumors about gassings in Europe during the Second World War, but what I needed was evidence that was both specific and contemporary. This line of inquiry led me to several clues suggesting that mass gassing stories were widely reported and discussed throughout the war. Even as the Irving trial was being fought, Eric A. Johnson published a book called *Nazi Terror*, which revealed that the author had successfully located the long lost BBC broadcast transcripts from the war years. These, along with other contemporary evidence, proved conclusively that radio broadcasts concerning gassings were beamed back to Germany, Poland, and other parts of occupied Europe, beginning in summer 1942 and continuing through the war, and that rumors of gassings in general had been rife from the fall of 1940.

In researching these ideas I was generally following by my own route a path that had been blazed by Butz, Faurisson, and Berg years ago. I had no preconceived theory of delusion, nor did I take the Princeton psychologist Elaine Showalter as my inspiration, as van Pelt claims. On the contrary, I sought out Showalter's work near the end of my research, because I was looking for contemporary discussion of hysterical symptoms that would bolster my theory.

Such attributions of influence do not refute the basic idea: the priority of propaganda and rumor to any non-

anonymous account of mass gassing simply means that we cannot exclude the possibility that all subsequent eyewitnesses are simply repeating the omnipresent rumor.

Naturally, this premise could be misleading. It may be that the eyewitnesses are entirely truthful, and that the disseminated propaganda and rumor reflected that truth. In that case, however, one would first have to prove the veracity of the gassing claims by other means in order to show that the rumors and propaganda did not cause the later accounts. Second, it would have to be explained how the gassing program was carried out, as claimed, with stealth and cunning under the full glare of Allied publicity. In short, I concluded that the priority of rumor and propaganda, while not disproving the mass gassing claim, justifies revisionist skepticism.

As this is my basic argument for evaluating testimony, van Pelt attempts to work around it. In his expert report for the Irving trial, he claimed that I had failed to show any evidence of media influence, specifically, of radio broadcasts. In fact, "Sherlock" referenced several, and in the three years since van Pelt wrote his original report more have come to light, including Johnson's discovery of the BBC transcripts, and several references to gassing reports as heard by the German Jew Viktor Klemperer and recorded in his recently published wartime diary. Together these are enough to torpedo van Pelt's argument.

Thus, van Pelt's case falls back on two other arguments. One, which appeared in the original report, is van Pelt's assertion that the Allies had no need to engage in propaganda because there was a willingness to fight, a "resolve" that had not been present in the First World War (p. 134). This argument assumes that lying about one's enemy is directly correlative to the extent to which popular support is lacking for war. That contention strikes us as at once far too wide-reaching — it is the kind of argument that would require a separate study to successfully argue — and furthermore, it seems to stand the relationship of the two wars on its head. If anything, the First World War was fought with greater gusto and idealism by all combatants than the Second, which began without the enthusiasm of 1914, and for the most part was waged with little more than dogged resignation on all sides.

Van Pelt's second argument on the testimony involves the claim, repeated whenever a new witness statement is introduced, that it "independently confirms" the content of someone else's testimony. But no evidence is advanced for the independence of these testimonies, only the assertion.

Furthermore, the thesis of independent confirmation would require that the Nazis' former prisoners, and the German POWs who testified in wartime trials staged by the Soviets, were not only oblivious to the news, broadcasts, and rumors circulating around them during the war, but even after the war, when such claims were universally trumpeted as evidence of the depravity of the Nazi regime. In addition, this thesis would require that the postwar interrogators and judges were similarly oblivious to these reports, and had absolutely no expectations of gas chamber testimony in the course of their questionings.

Next we must turn to the substance of the testimonies that van Pelt considers most accurate. In general, van Pelt's approach is to leave out the elements that tend to rebut a witness, or to explain such elements away. For example, when discussing the testimony of Ada Bimko, van Pelt's explanation of her notorious assertion that the poison gas at Auschwitz came in big round tanks is that Bimko misunderstood what she was shown (p. 234).[2] Similarly, in treating the diary entries of Dr. Kremer, and after discussing Faurisson's deconstruction of these texts,[3] van Pelt makes the surprising assertion that if Dr. Kremer were alive today, he would contradict Faurisson's reading (p. 290).

Even if one grants that van Pelt's explanations are possible, it should be clear that he is allowing a high degree of interpretative intervention into these texts. Therefore, he cannot legitimately claim that less invasive alternative explanations are not possible.

Of course revisionism's opponents are quick to complain about revisionist techniques of text criticism. Sometimes these critics have a point: just because a witness makes unlikely claims elsewhere, or even appears to deliberately lie, does not by itself mean that the witness is necessarily making things up about homicidal gassings. On the other hand, if a witness, speaking of matters other than gassing, is shown to have said untrue things, then questions regarding the reasons, and the motives, for such false statements clearly are in order. In such cases, one must conclude that the testimony may be doubted, including the claims of homicidal gassing.

No one can read the testimonies without concluding that something terrible was going on in these camps. To be frank, some of the testimonies van Pelt cites seem more probable than others, for example, the

statements attributed to Kurt Aumeier, and the brief comments of Josef Klehr and Hans Münch in recent decades. Nonetheless, the revisionist position that testimony may be doubted, not only because of the social and judicial pressures surrounding such testimony, but also because the gassing claims themselves originated in an atmosphere of anonymous rumor which makes all testimony potentially derivative, is irrefutable.

Documents

Of course, the eyewitness testimonies only have value if they can be correlated with the material and documentary reality of the camp. Here the revisionists have made important contributions in the past twenty-five years or so, based largely on the on-site investigations of Faurisson, which in turn have led to the forensic studies of Leuchter, Rudolf, Mattogno, and many others. The importance of the revisionist work is that the testimonies can now be evaluated in terms of the limits of the actual physical layout of the camps, and assessed in the knowledge of the scientific limits of Zyklon B usage and crematory operation. Hence, eyewitness testimonies that claim that the downstairs gas chambers were accessible to gigantic dump trucks, or describe clouds of blue or yellow poison gas, or maintain that a crematory undressing room was the length of two football fields, can all be safely set aside as being based on hearsay, or imagination, but not on reality.

The other aspect of the material approach concerns the documentary record of the camp, as it pertains to the operation of the crematories as "factories of death." Here van Pelt relies largely on his by now well-known analyses of a few key documents. Thus he claims that the much discussed "Vergasungskeller" ("gassing cellar") note was actually written by the building supervisor, Kirschneck, for signing by Auschwitz construction chief Bischoff, but that Bischoff noticed that Kirschneck had used a forbidden word ("Vergasungskeller," the interpretation of which remains contested) and therefore underlined it and sent the note back to its author, writing Kirschneck's name on it. Or he argues that the word "Sonderbehandlung" (special treatment), which occurs in a document concerning electrical consumption, must have had something to do with ventilating the gas chambers after a gassing, because "Sonderbehandlung" always means killing.

At this point I found myself becoming dissatisfied with Professor van Pelt's treatment, so superficial did his interpretations seem. I was able to discover several Auschwitz documents with Kirschneck's name scrawled on the top, which I reproduced in a monograph published shortly after the Irving trial.[4] By van Pelt's logic, this must mean that Kirschneck was continually being upbraided by his superiors, although of course the more likely explanation was that Kirschneck's name was simply written on his copies. As for the "simultaneous cremation and special treatment" in the electrician's memo, I can only repeat my argument that the alleged twenty minute ventilation time of the gas chamber would be meaningless within the time frame of a mass burning that would have taken at least two days, at a time when the crematory was still unequipped with a ventilation system.

Bomb Shelters

My dissatisfaction turned to disappointment on encountering van Pelt's thoroughly revised discussion of bomb shelters. During the past five years I have written three long monographs on this topic in order to advance the idea that German civil defense measures, including gas-tight doors with peepholes, are sufficient explanation for at least some of these fixtures, found at Auschwitz and other concentration camps, that are alleged to have been used for murder by gassing.

While it may surprise Professor van Pelt, the issue of bomb shelters had no place in the original scheme of "Sherlock." Rather, my bomb shelter articles were written separately, for a very specific purpose, namely, to force the establishment to credit a revisionist contribution to Holocaust historiography. Thus, even here, I was making a case against censorship: for, if the establishment was forced to concede the point, then the drive for censorship would be defeated, as the interdependence of the two positions would have been demonstrated. I was so rash as to expect in 1997 that the establishment, as well as other revisionists, would concede that the gas-tight doors with peepholes found at Auschwitz were bomb shelter doors by design and construction, regardless of whether they had been used for other purposes, say, disinfection chambers or homicidal gas chambers. That would have suited me, and the discussion could have continued from there. Yet there has been no concession. One might propose a number of reasons why the Holocaust establishment fails to concede the point, but in any case its obtuse refusal to face reality only underlines the extent to which the traditional story rests on rigid patterns of thinking that are serious need of the fillip revisionism provides.

Van Pelt's approach to the issue of bomb shelters is to be narrow and literalistic. Thus, Van Pelt argues, that because the first document concerning the construction at Auschwitz of dedicated bomb shelters comes only from November 1943, there could not have been any provision for civil defense, including gas-tight fixtures, before then. In the same way, van Pelt follows my revisionist critics in arguing that evidence for bomb shelters in 1944 is completely irrelevant, because the crematoriums had been constructed and fitted out with gas-tight materials a year earlier.

These lines of argument strike me as unnaturally narrow in scope. In the first place, van Pelt ignores the sizable amount of evidence that indicates an awareness and intention to implement civil air defense in existing buildings at Auschwitz, and points further east, in occupied Poland, beginning in the summer of 1942. It is true that we have no single document proving that the gas-tight doors from the spring of 1943 were put in place to fulfill civil defense requirements. But we don't have any documents indicating that these doors were put in place to gas people, or the objects that were unquestionably fumigated in the camps, either.

By ignoring the later documentation, van Pelt is able to ignore the fact that the gas-tight doors described from March 1944 are indistinguishable from the doors installed at the crematories the previous spring. Furthermore, he is oblivious to a contradiction implicit in his scenario: for he claims that doors of the same model, designed for the anti-fragmentation trenches for the guards, the workers, and even the prisoners, are supposed to have been used for homicidal purposes not only simultaneously, but at the time when the floodtide of Auschwitz gas exterminations was supposed to have taken place, as according to the standard narrative half a million people were gassed in the second half of 1944.

Van Pelt commits another blunder by ignoring the 1944 documentation on gas-tight bomb shelters, which shows that the crematory in the base camp, during its air raid shelter conversion, was to be equipped with gas-tight shutters, 60 cm x 80 cm. The design of these shutters is identical to that of the wooden shutters found there by Pressac some years ago, which he has claimed for Crematoriums IV and V. Pressac gave the measurements of their doors alone as 43 cm x 52 cm, corresponding to the specifications for the air raid shelter shutters, arguing that the original openings on the drawings were enlarged. Van Pelt, however, who describes handling the shutters, nevertheless persists in claiming that the shutters are 30 cm x 40 cm, that is, half the size they appear to be, and in flat contradiction to Pressac. He also omits the fact that according to the relevant work order they were made of sheet metal, rather than wood. I must confess my perplexity here.

Convergent Remains

The balance of van Pelt's book turns on other types of evidence at his disposal, evidence that he claims converges on a gassing interpretation, and cannot be explained otherwise. These include a discussion of cyanide traces which the resulting discussions between Rudolf and Richard Green (a Ph.D. chemist working for the U.S. chemical weapons program) has rendered moot, as cyanide was widely used at the camp for non-homicidal purposes.

Van Pelt devotes much consideration to the "insertion devices" whereby the poison gas would have been introduced into the gas chambers.[5] Yet these devices, the existence of which is supported solely by postwar depositions, are nowhere to be found. In the same way, there is no trace of these objects either in the work orders or in any of the architectural drawings, except via a contentious reading of a single inventory. Because these are the sole elements that would unambiguously point to the homicidal use of the basements of crematoria II and III, the absence of this evidence is quite important, despite van Pelt's attempt to compensate by providing numerous drawings of what the things must have looked like. Nor, in promoting the existence of these complicated wire mesh contraptions for two of the crematories, does van Pelt ever explain why there is no indication of there ever having been such devices in the two above-ground crematories, which, according to van Pelt, were purpose-built for killing.

The obverse of the claim for the wire-mesh insertion devices is, of course, the traces of the holes in the roof of the basement in which van Pelt maintains a half million people were murdered. It was on this point that Irving famously challenged van Pelt in court. To this charge, van Pelt describes first the advice Sir Martin Gilbert gave him over tea: to change the subject (p. 465), and second a report of recent date, as yet unpublished, that claims to have found three of the four holes. While van Pelt seems convinced a priori of the existence of the holes, his gestures on this topic, for whatever reason, come across as diffident and rather less than authoritative.

Toward a Respectful Dialogue

Professor van Pelt wrote this book as a historian, but when he testified at the Irving trial, he spoke not merely as a historian but as a man, a Dutch Jew who lost several family members to Nazi persecution, and for whom testifying was a way to bear witness to their memory. The anguish of van Pelt and the other members of the defense team also comes through from time to time in the pages of this book, as though revisionist criticism of the standard interpretation of what occurred at Auschwitz negates the cruelty and injustice of what the Jewish people experienced there. This attitude should be respected by revisionists, because it is a very important part of how Jews regard the Nazi persecution, and I believe that a rapprochement between traditional and revisionist interpretations cannot succeed otherwise.

Regardless of its defects, van Pelt's book is deserving of praise, even though it reaches conclusions that almost all revisionists will reject. This is due not only to his willingness to avoid offensive nomenclature (thus, "negationist" in place of "denier") and ad hominem arguments, but also to his readiness to look again at the evidence and debate the issues with revisionists point by point. To be sure, there are many points where, as indicated, van Pelt stopped short: he could have gone much farther with the evidence available. But the truth will not come all at once, especially concerning events, whatever the facts and whatever the dimensions, which are still a source of incalculable grief in the Jewish community.

With that in mind, I can accept criticism for my temerity in recent times in advocating the revisionist position. My efforts would not have been necessary had there not been a foolish effort to suppress, by blacklisting, prison terms, and harassment, those who dared to offer an alternative version of Nazi history.

It is to be hoped that van Pelt's book will give rise to much comment, and that his various interpretations will be subjected to a variety of critical responses by revisionists. If these commentaries, in turn, are couched in an objective and collegial spirit, as van Pelt's book generally is, then we might anticipate further development in Professor van Pelt's thinking and writing as time goes on. In that case, at least, my own purpose, so long frustrated, will have been achieved: for nothing serves as a greater bulwark to censorship than respectful dialogue.

Notes

1. "The Gas Chamber of Sherlock Holmes" has been posted to the website of Bradley Smith's Committee for Open Debate of the Holocaust and may be read at www.codoh.com/incon/inconshr123.html
2. For a dissection of the perjured testimony of Ada Bimko, who later served, under the name of Hadassah Rosensaft, on the committee that supervised the creation of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, see Carlo Mattogno's article "Two False Testimonies from Auschwitz" in JHR 10, no. 1 (Spring 1990).
3. See Faurisson's "Confessions of SS Men Who Were at Auschwitz," in JHR 2, no. 2 (Summer 1981).
4. This study, "Bomb Shelters in Birkenau," may be consulted at www.codoh.com/incon/inconbsinbirk.html My "Wartime Germany's Anti-Gas Air Raid Shelters: A Refutation of Pressac's 'Criminal Traces,'" a shorter article touching on many of the same issues, appeared in JHR 18, no. 4 (July-August 1999).
5. See Brian Renk's careful study of Van Pelt's Irving trial testimony on these, "Convergence or Divergence? Recent Evidence for Zyklon Induction Holes at Birkenau Crematory II," in JHR 20, nos. 5/6 (September-December 2001).

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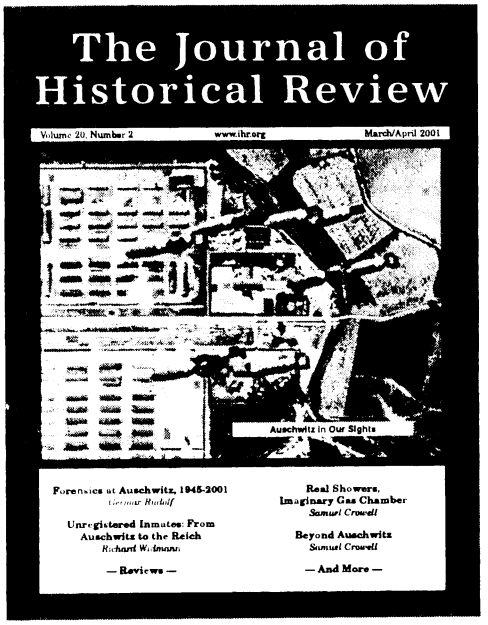

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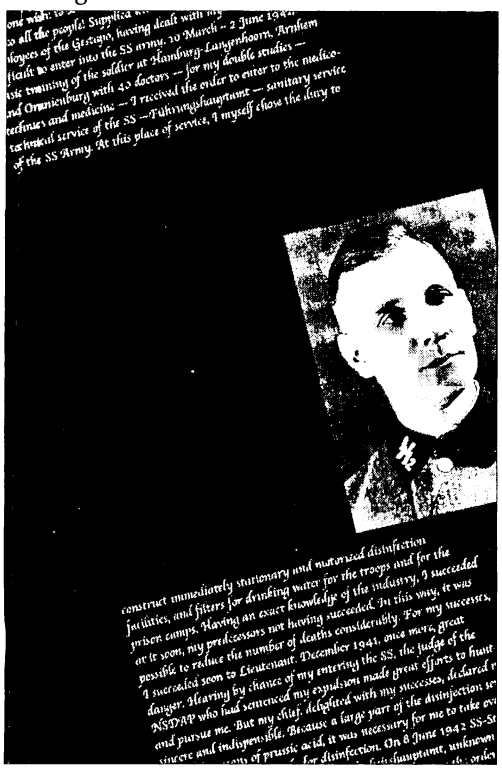

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More Letters

I recently received the second volume of David Irving's Churchill series, which looks magnificent. I now have to find the time to do justice to it.

Also, on the latest *Journal*, unless it's my imagination, the space made available for readers' letters seems to have been reduced significantly. If so, my input would be to see it restored to carrying the number of letters it used to. The mix of views and reactions was always interesting to read.

Jim Hogan
[by email]

Those Furtive Holes

Thanks for the latest *Journal* (20, nos. 5/6 [September-December, 2001]), which I read enthusiastically from cover to cover. I agree that the article by Brian Renk ("Convergence or Divergence?: On Recent Evidence for Zyklon Induction Holes at Auschwitz-Birkenau Crematory II") covers a most important "seemingly insignificant" issue. Please allow me to make one or two remarks on this very well-researched and -written piece.

Renk gives a good definition of "convergence of evidence" on p. 34: "a process of evaluation by which independent strands of evidence ... are said to indicate a common conclusion ...," and he shows how some researchers, in particular Robert Jan van Pelt, have distorted the evidence: van Pelt tries to make the openings smaller than what was stated by his favorite witnesses, Henryk Tauber and Michal Kula. The author also gives much weight to the divergence in interpretation of the evidence for the "openings" (which of course is another thing altogether from "convergence of evidence"). Nevertheless, the descriptions of the wire mesh devices given by Tauber and Kula are pretty much in agreement and so would seem to constitute "convergence of evidence," especially if they were independent.

Russ Granata has placed Carlo Mattogno's article on the "holes" in its English version, "No Holes, No Gas Chamber(s): An Historical-Technical Study of the Holes for Introducing Zyklon B in the Roof of Leichenkeller 1 of Krema II at Birkenau," on his website (www.russ-granata.com/noholes.html). Mattogno shows convincingly that not only are the claims of Kula and Tauber spurious but that fraud was most likely committed by the examining magistrate, Jan Sehn, on March 15, 1947, at the trial of Höss in Poland. I found John Ball's interpretation of the marks seen on the roofs of the Leichenkeller in the aerial photographs as possible CIA "forgeries" very unconvincing (why do this rather than show dots of "people" lined up for the "gas chambers"?). Mattogno expounds on Kenneth R. Wilson's suggestion of "discolorations": darker bitumen under the thin layer of cement shows through when the latter begins to disintegrate. Much more plausible!

There is a fair amount of overlap with Renk's article, but I think that Mattogno's, with its thorough use of sources (in particular from the *Zentralbauleitung*) is the more incisive, and it would be good to see it — perhaps after some editing — in the JHR. (For example, some details could go into the footnotes for easier reading.)

All the other articles in the *Journal* were interesting too, especially Mark Weber's on Wilhelm Höttl and the reviews. I can understand the disappointment over R. B. Stinnett's study, yet it would be most interesting to know just how much of the Japanese code the U.S. was reading on the eve of the Pearl Harbor attack. Daniel Michael's reviews of the latest books on Barbarossa give the impression that discussion on who preempted whom in this war may enter the mainstream before Holocaust revisionism does.

Costas Zaverdinos
Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

Technical Arguments

I enjoyed reading the copy of the *Journal* you sent me (20, nos. 5/6 [September-December, 2001]). Keep up the good work, especially with somewhat technical articles such as Brian Renk's. The technical arguments are the key to unraveling the hoax — and must never be sold short.

In the advertisement for Germar Rudolf's *Dissecting the Holocaust* on the inside back cover of that issue, the title of my chapter is incorrectly given as identical to the title of my 1984 essay, which appeared in JHR 5, no. 5 (Winter 1984-5). The correct chapter title is "The Diesel Gas Chambers: Ideal for Torture, Absurd for Murder." This chapter is quite different from my earlier essay, and I want people to recognize that, and to read it.

Friedrich P. Berg
Scottsdale, AZ

Revising Revisionism's Reviser

I was quite astonished to read "New Light on Dr. Miklos Nyiszli and His Auschwitz Book" (JHR 20, no. 1 [January-February 2001]) by Charles Provan, whom you describe as a "revisionist who believes in the gas chambers," or as he describes himself "a believer in the revisionist method." The work was so ridiculous as to be unworthy to be published in your journal, unless it was there to prove how pitiful even moderate exterminationists have become.

Provan clearly sets out to prove that Nyiszli has been misrepresented,

even though he suggests that he already knows the book is bogus by stating: "I was proceeding under the hypothesis that Nyiszli's book had in fact been written by someone else."

After exhaustive research Provan came to the same conclusion that revisionists had before him: the book was rubbish. Thereafter, however, he completely ignored the revisionist method to which he ascribes, and gives us the gem of wisdom that the book was not a nonsensical extravagance at all but an "historical novel." An oxymoron if ever there was one! Instead of simply admitting that revisionists were quite correct all along, he seems suddenly to feel that he has strayed from friendly territory and come too close to the revisionist camp. He almost appears to feel sorry for his exterminationist friends, and to be making an effort to soften the blow.

Revisionists have a deserved reputation for calling a spade a spade and not suddenly changing direction when research seems ready to deliver an unwanted result. I understand that Mr. Provan deserves credit for debating the undebatable, but for my money you seem so grateful for his willingness to debate that you forgive him far too much.

Paul Jones
[by email]

Revisionist Pied-Noir

Dr. Faurisson's mention of Germany in the Hitler years was most interesting ("An Imaginary Holocaust May Lead to a Real Holocaust," JHR 20, no. 1 [January-February 2001]). Perhaps one day it will be possible to discuss objectively what Hitler and the National Socialist regime accomplished, in six short years, on the social front.

As a pied-noir (a European from Algeria) born in 1943, I grew up in isolation from the anti-Nazi frenzy that exists in Europe to this day. From 1955 to 1962 we were also occupied with a guerrilla war against the Arab terrorists of the FLN [National Liberation Front (of Algeria) — Ed.], who had the total support of the UN and the U.S.A., so we had other concerns than living in the past.

If your readers would like to know what happened to us and to the Arabs faithful to France, they can learn by visiting the website: www.algerie-francaise.org. I have translated several pertinent documents which may be read at the site's English-language page. The website also displays photographs of the atrocities; the worst pictures will never be published.

Forty years later, we who had to leave Algeria must still endure the insults of the left, the FLN, and their fellow travelers. What brings us hope is that more and more of the generation that was born in France after 1962 or were babies at that time is interested in learning more about what we had to suffer, not only from the terrorists of the FLN but also from the secret service and police of Degaulle's French government. This is an area of history that also needs revising before my generation dies off and there is nobody left to tell of our losses, human and material.

I have been a revisionist since 1961, when I began to read interviews of Paul Rassinier in the weekly, *Rivarol*. I already knew a lot, thanks to my father's friends, and I haven't ceased to learn.

We are grateful for the IHR and the *Journal*, since it is becoming harder and harder in France to write anything objective on the history of the Second World War. Best of luck to all of you.

Alexander Siaus
Australia

[The displacement from Algeria of its European colonists, many of whose families had been there for generations, and the terrible vengeance exacted on numerous Arabs loyal to France is one of the many tragedies of the twentieth century, and Degaulle's policy of outwardly reassuring the pied-noirs while working surreptitiously to abandon French rule in Algeria was certainly duplicitous. It should be said, however, that Algeria's Arabs and Berbers suffered, too, and there are notable revisionists who have favored and supported Algerian self-determination, whatever the shortcomings of the FLN. What makes the situation tragic, as with so many national liberations (or rebirths) that have been intertwined with terrorist tactics, draconian reprisals, and wholesale uprootings of long-settled peoples, is that there is usually some justice on each side, and on each it is very often the innocent who have paid the biggest price. Those who would diabolize the pied-noirs of French Algeria, as has long been the custom among certain jackals of the French left, would do well to recall that. — Editor]

Likes Our Looks

The latest issue of the JHR came yesterday. I like the new typefaces, and the overall appearance is much improved. I read Mark Weber's article on [Wilhelm] Höttl with great interest and appreciate the background info on this unreliable witness. He was as bad as Tauber and Kula and Olère et al.! Again, your article shows that Butz was amazingly way out front in 1976.

Robert Countess
[by email]

We welcome letters from readers. We reserve the right to edit for style and space. Write: Editor, P.O. Box 2739, Newport Beach, CA 92659, USA, or e-mail us at editor@ihr.org

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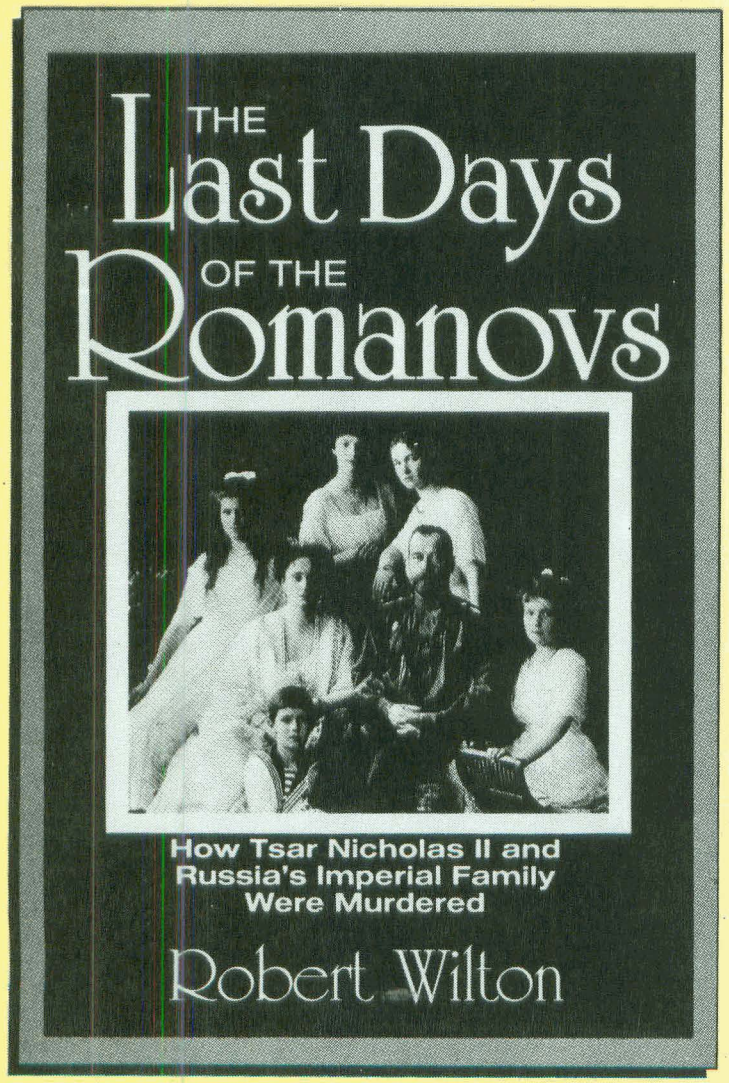

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